

arrow (small)	350/220
onion (green)	280/180
onion (dry)	130/80
olive (green)	500/400
olive (black)	750/500
peas	600/400
pepper (hot)	270/220
pepper (sweet)	350/240
potato	330/210
pumpkin	280/180
string Bean	450/320
tomato	300/200



Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Hani Riad Saturday meets with Director of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Abdullah Etoum to review cooperation between Petra and the Middle East News Agency of Egypt as well as facilities for Jordanian media covering the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference due to convene in Cairo on Nov. 12 (Petra photo)

PSD announces four arrests for drug and artefact trafficking

AMMAN (Petra) — The Anti-Narcotics and Forgery Department (NFD) at the Public Security Department (PSD) Saturday announced the arrest of four people in connection with drug trafficking and artefact thefts in the past week.

NFD Director Nazib Shreideh said the driver of a car with a licence plate from an unnamed Arab country was arrested during a routine border check when NFD agents found 350,000 captagon pills in a hidden compartment in his vehicle.

Investigations revealed that the illicit drugs were destined for another Arab

country, Colonel Shreideh said.

He also announced Saturday the arrest of three men trying to sell artefacts from Irbid, Jerash and Aqaba.

He said that his office had received a tip and that the confiscated artefacts included earthen pots, mosaic plates, glass flasks and statues dating back to diverse historic eras.

Also Saturday, the PSD opened a six-week training seminar at the Amman Police Academy for 25 officials from the Customs Department. The seminar intends to provide these officials with skills in identifying smuggled drugs, and weapons as well as effective methods in dealing with the traffickers themselves.

Academy Director Colonel Ahmad Amaral said that the police and customs departments share a common goal: combating crime and apprehending criminals.

The participants are to be oriented on ways to combat smuggling, vehicle inspection for illicit merchandise, recognising different kinds of drugs, methods of drug and explosives concealment and skills such as target shooting and self-defence techniques.

Food programme focuses on support to rural women workers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is intent upon closely cooperating with the World Food Programme (WFP) in promoting the role of women in agricultural development and increased food production, Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat said Saturday.

Addressing the opening session of a six-day workshop covering enfranchisement of rural women, the minister stated that Jordan has been cooperating with the WFP since 1963, beginning with projects for settling bedouin tribes, in order to augment the Kingdom's livestock wealth.

The role of women is an essential element in promoting agricultural development and the ministry is giving [this situation] due attention, the minister said.

The WFP has supplied Jordan with \$92 million worth of food aid in addition to \$11 million worth of agricultural inputs used on

highland development projects over the past three decades, Dr. Shneikat said.

The minister maintained that the programme's continued assistance has helped Jordan carry out socio-economic plans to ensure food security, fight poverty and protect and improve the environment and agricultural resources.

Late last month Dr. Shneikat announced that the WFP approved of a \$16 million fund to finance highland development projects in Jordan between the years 1997 and 2001.

The minister addressed the meeting, saying that the funds will be portioned into three projects which emphasise the role of rural women and that a certain share will be used to train rural women in skills related to food production.

WFP Regional Director Mustafa Milad also addressed the meeting describing his organisation

as providing assistance for socio-economic projects in more than 90 developing countries.

He expressed his gratitude to HRH Princess Basma for her role in promoting the role of women in rural regions and said that the programme's \$16 million approved grant for agricultural development will provide for training to help these women supplement their families' income.

Delegates participating in the workshop, held at the Amra Hotel, will review reports dealing with the current situation of rural women, WFP plans and ensuring food security in the third world.

Senior officials from specialised UN agencies based in the Middle East are also taking part in the meetings.

The WFP is affiliated to the Rome-based UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and receives voluntary

contributions of commodities, cash and services from member governments of the United Nations. The WFP uses such donations to support economic and social development projects in developing nations and for emergency relief for victims of natural and other disasters.

In Jordan the food aid is supplied as incentive in development auto-initiative programmes as semi-wages in labour-intensive projects and particularly in the rural economy.

Also Saturday, Dr. Shneikat met with a team of German specialists currently involved in the implementation of an agricultural extension service project, financed by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation.

Dr. Shneikat affirmed that the agricultural extension service constitutes a basic link in a "chain of services provided by the min-

istry to local farmers" and is the main global method used to convey agricultural knowledge, modern technology and the outcome of scientific research in order to help increase food production.

Indeed, he said, the ministry relies on the agricultural extension service in order to take a qualitative step forward in the agricultural sector.

Urging German experts to further their efforts, the minister voiced Jordan's deep appreciation of the German government for its continued support and aid to national agricultural projects.

The German team and ministry officials reviewed the project's progress, scheduled to be completed in May 1997. The group said that the Germans could extend the project for another three years.

Seminar covers engineer education

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour opened a one-day seminar, at the Professional Associations Complex in Amman, to discuss continued engineering education.

The meeting was organised by the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) and attended by engineers from both the private and public sectors.

The minister said the government was determined to support professional associations provided that their basic work involved continual professional training dedicated to further ameliorate skill and efficiency.

Dr. Ensour praised the JEA for its provision of continued engineer training, adding that only through such programmes can the associations improve members' skills.

JEA President Hosni Abu Ghida addressed the opening session, outlining association programmes for member training as well as conferences, symposiums and international conferences which many have been attending.

He outlined the JEA board's recently endorsed plans for constructing a continued education centre for engineers, adding that a special committee set up to run this centre was Saturday assuming this task.

The participants also reviewed reports regarding the design of engineering teaching and training programmes, local market engineering needs and engineering education in the Kingdom's colleges and universities.

'Library sciences not yet up to par'

AMMAN (Petra) — One hundred delegates representing 16 countries Saturday commenced a three-day seminar covering publication and Arab bibliography, organised by the Ministry of Culture in conjunction with the Arab Federation of Libraries and Information.

Opening the meeting was acting Minister of Culture Kamal Nasser who confirmed that Jordan is pursuing efforts to stimulate book publications and has established a national publishing house to achieve that goal.

This seminar is as useful to researchers and scholars as it is for university teachers and students, said the minister who added that the

national publishing house is bound to contribute to the promotion of intellectual production, book publications and assorted bibliographies.

Federation President Abdul Jalil Tamimi told the assembly that the meeting intends to promote cooperation among federation members as well as highlight the role of librarians in general education and in coping with worldwide cultural and educational revolutions.

Director of the National Library Usama Miquddi said that the meeting offers an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of views from Arab and foreign participants and likewise the study of issues involved in bibliography publication.

Despite efforts made in the library sciences, Arab nations lag behind others in this field, said Miquddi, who noted that several working papers to be reviewed by the delegates focus on means of promoting achievements of libraries and information centres.

These same reports deal with Arabic books, publication and bibliography controls, libraries, information centres and universities, he added.

The meeting's delegates hail from Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Malaysia and France.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister returns home from India

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Supply Munir Sobar returned home Saturday after an official visit to India. In a press statement, the minister said that he met with the Indian ministers of trade, agriculture and food and that they discussed means of enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries as well as increasing the volume of trade exchange. He added that he briefed the Indian officials on the Kingdom's advancements in privatisation falling within the national economy restructuring programme. The group also discussed the private sector's role in the development process.

Chinese official to meet with House speakers

AMMAN (Petra) — Head of the permanent committee of China's parliamentary national council Chiao Chi is expected to arrive in Amman on Nov. 9 for a three-day official visit. He will be accompanied by a thirty-member delegation including the secretary general of the council's permanent committee and the first deputy of the Chinese foreign minister. Mr. Chi will also meet with speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament as well as a number of senior officials.

Tourism down in Madaba — director

MADABA (Petra) — Director of the Madaba Tourism Office Sami Ajameh stated that the number of tourists to the governorate in the first ten months of this year was 143,550, compared to 160,000 tourists in the same period for 1995. Numbers of visitors of the historical and tourist sites in the town of Madaba and nearby sites considerably decreased during this year because of political developments in the Middle East peace process, Mr. Ajameh said. Ma' in Spa village, a tourist and health spa in the governorate of Madaba, received more than half of a million visitors in 1995.

WHAT'S GOING ON

BALLET

Performance by ballet troupe Ballet Du Nord at the Royal Cultural Centre, main theatre at 8:00 p.m.

CONCERT

Concert by American band "The Forgettables" at the American Centre Auditorium, Abdoun (7:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.)

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of works by Zurich-based Jordanian artist Nabil Shehadeh at Darat Al-Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by Jordanian artist Mohammad Nassar and works by contemporary artists, until Nov. 13.

Homeless Weaving and New Creations — Home Furnishings and Accessories" at Jordan Crafts Development Centre (Al Aydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle, until Nov. 10.

Abstract (plastic) art by Sa'id Haddadin at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina, until Nov. 10.

Hamida Women's Weaving Project '96 fall exhibition "Race the Trend" at Green Dirani Showroom, Shmeisani until Nov. 3.

Exhibition of "Visual Forms" by Abdul Latif Al Smoodi at Baladan Art Gallery, Ghoras street, until Nov. 15.

JUST works on development of masters in nursing programme

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Faculty of Nursing at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) is developing a masters of science programme in nursing which will start in 1997-1998, a JUST statement said Saturday.

According to the statement, a recent workshop at JUST, a state-run university, was conducted to assess community needs for such a programme.

Entitled "Bridging Higher Education in Nursing with the Community Needs in Jordan," the workshop was moderated by Rowaida Ma'aitah, Dean of Faculty of Nursing.

Twenty senior nursing professionals from the Ministry of Health, private and public hospitals and universities, the Royal Medical Services, the Jordanian Nursing Association and 10 representatives of the JUST Faculty of Nursing discussed the following topics:

- Concepts, beliefs, values and a framework for the philosophy of the proposed masters programme.
- Type and nature of the proposed programme.

- Priorities of specialisation.
- Tasks and roles for the programme graduates.
- Qualifications of the graduates.
- Differences between the MSN nurse and the BSN nurse.

All participants agreed that there is a need for clinical specialisation both in hospital setting and primary health care settings.

A clinical nurse specialist title was recommended for the programme graduates. The development of the programme is part of the international project, Development of Human Resources in Jordan conducted with the University of Windsor-Canada and sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

The University of Jordan, whose Faculty of Nursing was established in 1972, recently introduced a masters programme in nursing education.

Many of the country's nurses who hold masters in this health care profession obtained their higher degrees abroad.

Three people killed in road accidents

MAAN (J.T.) — Three people were killed and two others injured, one seriously, as a result of two separate road accidents in the Maan governorate Friday evening, according to a report released Saturday by the Civil Defence Department (CDD).

A CDD spokesman said that Engineer Imad Taha Khalil Zatreh, 35, and Zubeir Mousa Ibrahim, 45, were killed in an accident which involved two vehicles in a head-on collision about 10 kilometres south of Maan. This accident also caused the serious injury of Nida Azar, 30 and Hassan Qaisi, 30 who were taken to local hospitals for treatment.

In the second accident Nael Masri, 49, was killed when his car, bearing a Saudi Arabian licence plate, overturned when one of its tyres exploded near Maan.

The CDD also reported that in the past

week it responded to 607 incidents, including fires, first aid and rescue operations. These incidents resulted in 26 deaths and injuries.

Meanwhile, some of the Bahrainis injured in an accident on the Amman-Azraq road last week, which killed five of the twenty-seven visitors, were reported as receiving treatment in Zarqa government hospitals.

Their bus had been hit by an oncoming truck.

Bahraini Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Musallam Saturday visited the injured and spoke with the director of the hospital.

Later, he spoke to journalists expressing his gratitude for His Majesty King Hussein and the government for the medical care and be thanked the hospital staff and CDD officers for their efforts and services.

Ballet Du Nord to perform Giselle at RCC

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's Birthday and under the Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the National Music Conservatory (NMC) /Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the French Cultural Centre in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture will present the French Ballet du Nord in a performance of Giselle tonight at the Royal Cultural Centre, a NMC statement said.

Comprised of 22 dancers, Ballet du Nord was founded in 1983 in Rubix, France.

The company is affiliated to the French Ministry of Culture and has given performances all over Europe.

Giselle is a classical ballet in two acts that

embodies the ideals of the Romantic movement.

French composer Adolph Adam set the music to a libretto by Gautier and Saint-Georges based on a legend recounted by Heinrich Heine, one of the foremost Romantic poets. Giselle was first performed at the Theatre of the Royal Academy of Music in Paris in 1841 and has been a favourite with ballet audiences ever since, the statement said.

This new version by Ballet du Nord has been choreographed by Maryse Delente.

According to the NMC, the new interpretation is faithful to the classical heritage of Giselle, yet speaks to contemporary ballet audiences.

The Editor and staff of the Jordan Times

offer their sincere condolences to their colleague Tareq Momani over the death of his uncle,

Hussein Ali Momani

May he rest in peace

Clinton talks finance reform; Dole begins 96-hour tour

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton tried to quell the debate raging over the influence of money in politics Friday as Republican Bob Dole began a cross-country marathon buoyed by signs the White House race was tightening.

At a campaign stop in California, Mr. Clinton finally addressed allegations the White House had encouraged improper Democratic Party fund-raising among Asian business interests. He said the U.S. system had forced both parties into over-intensive fund-raising and reforms were long overdue.

That system had resulted in record-breaking contributions of \$1.762 billion to presidential and congressional candidates in this election cycle, according to public citizen.

A report Friday by the non-profit watchdog group showed that contributions from individuals, corporations and other organisations were 232 per cent higher for Democrats and 166 per cent higher for Republicans.

Mr. Clinton said the

Democrats had "played by the rules," claimed Republicans had thwarted efforts to tighten campaign finance laws and proposed bans on political donations both from foreign-owned U.S. firms and non-American citizens.

The issue of election financing has gathered force in the waning days before Tuesday's election, and a new Reuters daily tracking poll suggested it was now hurting Mr. Clinton.

The poll of 1,200 likely voters released Friday showed Mr. Clinton's lead was just 5.5 per centage points at 42 per cent to 36.5 for Sen. Dole. Five days ago Mr. Clinton had a 13-point lead.

Reform Party candidate Ross Perot, who has also hit Mr. Clinton hard on the fund-raising issue, had 8.4 per cent with 11.2 per cent undecided. The poll's margin of error is 3 points.

Friday's CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll showed Mr. Clinton leading by 18 points while the ABC News tracking survey put Sen. Dole within 11 points of the president.

Sen. Dole, who began a marathon 96-hour cross-country campaign finale in Ohio, also got some good news in polls of states that will play key roles in Tuesday's balloting.

He had opened a five-point lead, 47 per cent to 42 per cent, in Texas according to a poll published Friday in the Dallas Morning News and the Houston Chronicle.

And in Georgia, one of four southern states Mr. Clinton carried in 1992, a survey of 925 likely voters published in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution showed Mr. Clinton's lead had shrunk to three points from 15 points a month ago.

The campaign finance controversy centres on a senior Democratic Party fund-raiser who raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from powerful Asian business interests while also paying regular visits to the White House, which has refused to discuss the visits in detail. Sen. Dole, Mr. Perot and others say this raises questions of illegal foreign influence peddling. Mr. Clinton ignored the specifics of these charges

but tried to defuse the issue by saying both his Democratic Party and Sen. Dole's Republicans had been forced to raise hundreds of millions of dollars to run effective campaigns.

"Special interests still have too much say," he said in his speech in Santa Barbara, California.

"Everybody knows the problems with campaign money; There's too much of it, it takes too much time to raise and it raises too many questions."

Sen. Dole, launching his grueling final campaign run in Columbus, Ohio, wryly questioned Mr. Clinton's motivation for urging reform less than five days before the general election.

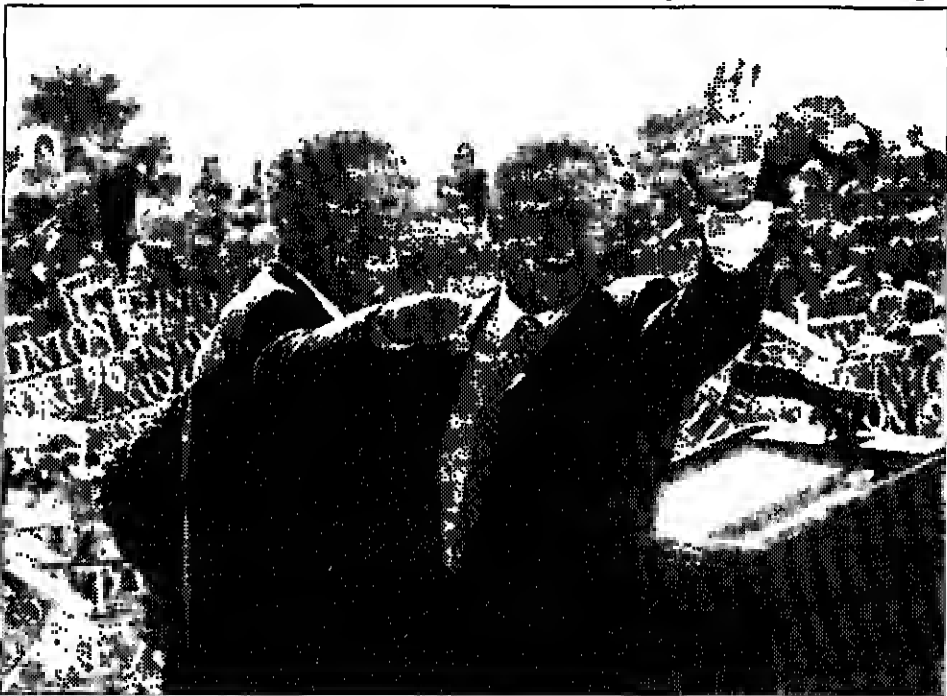
"The administration is in the midst of a growing scandal involving a flow of foreign money into the Democratic Party that bought access to the White House. So now Bill Clinton decides to talk about campaign finance reform," Sen. Dole said.

Mr. Perot, in a speech at Stanford University, also accused the president of cynicism and said Mr. Clinton could not be trusted to follow through on his proposals.

"If you believe a word of it, I've got stuff in my attic that's been there for years I'd likely sell you right after this speech, cause you will buy anything," Mr. Perot said. "That speech today (by Clinton) is one of the most cynical things I've ever heard."

After a send-off by former Presidents George Bush and Gerald Ford in Columbus, the 73-year-old Dole started a 96-hour "victory tour" slated to allow only "show-er stops" as it roars through 14 states in four days.

It began in the must-win heartland state of Ohio and would wind through the midwest and the western plains states and California before landing him in his boyhood home of Russell, Kansas, to vote on election day, Nov. 5.



President Bill Clinton waves to the crowd gathered for a campaign rally at Santa Barbara City College with congressional candidate Walter Capps (left) Friday. Mr. Clinton will campaign Saturday in California, Texas and New Mexico (Reuter photo)

Man charged over N. Ireland army base blast

BELFAST (R) — A 32-year-old Belfast kitchen designer was charged with conspiracy Saturday in connection with the IRA bombing of the British army's northern Ireland headquarters.

Michael Rogan appeared briefly in a Belfast court to be charged with conspiring to cause explosions between June 3 and Oct. 8. He was not required to enter a plea.

The Irish Republican Army bomb on Oct. 7 killed a British soldier, injured 20, and marked a major escalation of the IRA's campaign to end British rule of northern Ireland.

A police superintendent told the court that Mr. Rogan had denied any involvement in the bombing under questioning but said the prosecution would produce physical, witness, forensic and circumstantial evidence to back up its case.

Mr. Rogan's lawyer said his client had objected to three people who had picked him out at an identity parade and had also suffered "physical abuse" under questioning.

Two IRA car bombs were driven into the base, at Lisburn outside Belfast, past television security cameras, document checks and British troops and parked before exploding.

Security sources said one device was placed to cause maximum destruction while a second was located near a medical centre to hit people being taken for treatment from the first device.

The attack prompted a major review of security at Britain's most closely-guarded military base anywhere and led to allegations from politicians that

Britain had dropped its guard during a 17-month IRA ceasefire.

The IRA truce ended in February when guerrillas attacked targets in Britain and a British army base in Germany but the Lisburn bombs were the first in the province for two years.

Britain's independent television news reported that IRA units were gathering somewhere in Ireland to discuss strategy but the guerrillas' political arm, Sinn Fein, said it had no knowledge of such a meeting.

ITN said that up to 100 IRA activists would review their tactics but were unlikely to discuss calling a new ceasefire.

It said the occasion was what the IRA calls a special army convention, the guerrillas' supreme body. It has met only twice before, in 1969 and 1986.

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton said this week that he believed the IRA would call a new truce to get Sinn Fein invited to peace talks under way in Belfast but gave no details.

Britain and Ireland say Sinn Fein cannot take part in the talks until the IRA calls an unequivocal ceasefire but Sinn Fein says the talks are framed to make its guerrilla allies surrender their weapons.

It says there can be no discussion of disarming northern Ireland's guerrillas until an overall political settlement is achieved. Britain says no party can come to the peace talks with armed supporters who might attack any settlement they dislike.

CIA goes to rare lengths over coverup charge

LANGLEY, Virginia (R) — The CIA went to rare lengths Friday to rebut two former employees' charges that it had covered up evidence of possible U.S. troop exposure to Iraqi chemical weapons during the 1991 Gulf war.

At a highly unusual On-Camera news conference at its headquarters, the woman who runs the spy agency's day-to-day affairs announced that CIA Inspector-General Frederick Hitz would investigate the coverup charges and report "as expeditiously as possible."

"We have held nothing back," CIA Executive Director Nora Slatkin told the packed news conference, which she limited to the lone issue she wanted to address. She said the agency had turned over "every document we have" to a White House panel that is trying to get to the bottom of Gulf war veterans' illnesses.

Earlier this week, Patrick and Robin Eddington said they had found evidence of up to 60 separate incidents in which nerve gas or other chemical weapons were released near U.S. troops. But they said CIA higher-ups had tried to prevent them from pursuing their personal investigation and that going ahead with it in effect destroyed their careers.

The two, who are married and who resigned from the CIA earlier this year, are suing the agency and writing a book about their case. Patrick Eddington, 33, said in an interview after the news conference that he was convinced a government coverup was still underway and called for a congressional investigation.

At the core of his complaint were 58 classified cables and logs that he said showed Iraq had deployed chemical munitions into the Kuwait theatre of operations. He has accused the CIA of trying to hide the information to cover up what he has equated with criminal negligence in dealing with the possible source of veterans' medical ills.

He said the documents at issue were given to the White House panel only because he had insisted they be turned over. He added the Pentagon and the CIA were still hanging on to "literally tens of thousands of pages of unit logs," as well as possible material he did not have the clearance to see.

Ms. Slatkin, asked whether the CIA had turned over the 58 documents grudgingly, at Eddington's insistence, said: "I don't believe that's true."

She said the material in question had been given in late 1995 to the presidential advisory committee on Gulf war veterans' illnesses, which is due to report its findings by the end of next month. Later, a CIA spokesman specified it had been sent in November.

Ms. Slatkin said the CIA had begun making the documents public Thursday, releasing an initial 21 of them on a defence department site on the internet known as GulfLink (<http://www.Dtic.Dla.Mil/gulfink>). Thirty-six others were being censored to protect sensitive intelligence sources and methods before being released, and one will not be made public because it belongs to another government, she said.

"We are doing this because we want to show that we are being as forthcoming as possible," she added. She said CIA Director John Deutch had ordered the inspector general probe because the Eddingtons had made serious allegations.

"We can't let them stand. We need to restore everyone's confidence in the concept that we're committed to being as open as possible. We have nothing to hide here," she said.



Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole waves to supporters during a booming rock music introduction with his wife Elizabeth, and former Presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush (left) in this central Ohio town of Columbus Friday. The rally here marked the beginning of Sen. Dole's 96 hour non-stop campaign trip to election day (Reuter photo)

Brazilian airline avoids speculation on crash

SAO PAULO (R) — Brazil's Tam Airline refused to speculate Friday on what caused a Fokker-100 to crash into a densely populated Sao Paulo neighbourhood, killing at least 101 people in the city's worst air disaster.

"All we know is that the plane lacked power," Tam president and owner Rolim Adolfo Amaro told a news conference at Congonhas Airport, where the fatal Flight 402 took off Thursday morning.

Mr. Amaro said Fokker technicians and specialists from other airlines were on their way to help Tam and Brazilian aviation officials determine the causes of the crash. Officials were expected to release their findings within 90 days.

All 96 people on board the shuttle flight to Rio de Janeiro and at least five people on the ground were killed when the 108-seat plane ploughed through Parque Jabaquara neighbourhood 30 seconds after takeoff.

In Rio de Janeiro, police said Friday cocaine found among the wreckage of the plane belonged to a trafficker, Mauro Rodrigues Motos, whom police were waiting to arrest when the plane landed there.

The discovery of nine

pounds (four kilograms) of cocaine in a black plastic bag among the debris amazed rescue workers, until the police statement Friday.

Motos had travelled from Campo Grande in Mato Grosso State. He had been convicted four years ago of drug trafficking but was given a conditional release after serving only two years of a 12-year sentence, the spokesman said.

Tam officials said the plane had problems gaining altitude and never managed to climb above 30 metres.

Witnesses at the airport said they saw the thrust reverser on the Fokker's right turbine deploy automatically as the plane raced down the runway.

The thrust reverser, engaged during landings to help bring a plane to a stop, is designed to reverse the direction of the engine's thrust, creating aerodynamic resistance.

The Brazilian media speculated that the Tam flight could have suffered the same fate as a Lunda-Air flight that crashed in Thailand in 1991. Investigators determined the thrust reverser on the Austrian airline's Boeing 767-300 engaged automatically, causing the plane to crash soon after takeoff.

Tam officials, however, said such a scenario would be highly unlikely.

"Our plane was quite different from the Lunda plane. It had an entirely different (thrust reverser) system," Luiz Fernandez Falco, Tam's vice president of marketing, said.

By late Friday, only 35 of the 101 bodies at the city morgue had been identified. Police said many of the bodies were burned beyond recognition.

The disaster shocked Brazil's financial community as the list of the dead included the names of many well known banking and business executives. Citibank, Bank Of Boston, Siemens and Coca-Cola were among multinational firms that had executives on board.

Unibanco, Brazil's second-largest financial institution, reported eight of its executives had died on the flight.

Tam recently announced it would expand flights to the United States. At a news conference three days ago, Tam's Amaro said, "the worst that could happen to us would be an aircraft accident."

Tam Stock, which had risen more than 150 per cent so far this year, plunged almost 15 per cent after the accident.



Unidentified family members of the Tam Airlines plane crash victims mourn their losses outside the Sao Paulo Medical Institute (IML) after identifying the remains. All 96 people on board and at least eight people on the ground died when Tam Airlines' Flight 402 ploughed into a densely populated area just 30 seconds after takeoff. Only 30 bodies at the city morgue had been positively identified (Reuter photo)

Armenia's opposition rallies for 'non-violent change' in government

MOSCOW (AFP) — As many as 20,000 citizens rallied in Yerevan in support of Armenia's opposition party Friday calling for "non-violent change," the Ekho Moskovy news agency reported.

Opposition leader Vazgen Manukian, who lost last September's presidential elections to Levon Ter-Petrosian, said that change must be brought into the government "quickly, smoothly and as intelligently as possible," the Interfax news agency reported him as saying.

"A regime based on falsification will not change its essence even if there are changes of staff," said Mr. Manukian who is the leader of the National Democratic Union and a parliamentary deputy.

He called Armenia a "bankrupt state" and said that "things will be more difficult in the future."

Other opposition leaders at the rally appealed to the constitutional court to declare the results of the presidential elections invalid because of numerous offenses recorded by national and international observers.

In a statement released the same day by the government, voters were urged to participate actively in the Nov. 10 elections for newly-created mayoralities and local councils.

The statement said that the new bodies "will replace largely ceremonial and inefficient local Soviets," Interfax reported.

The message also urged all political forces — both opposition and non-opposition — to participate in the elections "in an atmosphere of free competition and to choose honest, competent, and enterprising people."

Suu Kyi urges supporters not to give up after talks prevented

RANGOON (R) — Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi Saturday urged supporters not to give up after the military government prevented her from giving a speech at the front gate of her home.

"Keep trying," she told hundreds of supporters at an intersection about 300 metres from her University Avenue residence. "I will try to be able to hold our talks officially tomorrow."

She made the brief comments after she left her home in a car in order to get close to supporters prevented by the authorities from approaching her house. When the people saw her car they ran in a group to hear what she had to say.

This is the sixth consecutive weekend Ms. Suu Kyi has been prevented from speaking.

The speeches, which began as spontaneous gatherings after the Nobel Peace laureate was released from six years of house arrest in July 1995, have become a regular fixture Saturdays and Sundays and are the only way Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party can disseminate information.

The ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has declared the gatherings illegal and said unless they were held inside Ms. Suu Kyi's compound, they would be stopped.

But Ms. Suu Kyi refused to hold them inside, saying they were "public gatherings that should not have to be held behind closed doors."

The SLORC began preventing the weekend gatherings as part of a crackdown on the NLD in late September.

On Saturday about 100 police and military intelligence officers, mostly in plainclothes, patrolled the streets from midday and stopped pedestrians from getting closer than 100 metres to Ms. Suu Kyi's house.

"This is unfair," said Aung Aung, after being told he could not bear Ms. Suu Kyi's speech. "We want to hear Aung San Suu Kyi, but they won't let us go."

"We don't like them," another man said. "They were not elected. They do not have actual authority. But they have the guns."

Ms. Suu Kyi's NLD party won a landslide victory in a 1990 election but was never allowed to rule because the SLORC refused to recognise the result of the election.

Shortly after the speech was due to begin at 4 p.m. Police blocked off the street to vehicles when several hundred people refused to go home and others continued to drive back and forth to see if Ms. Suu Kyi would speak.

About 100 people who refused to leave had a minor run-in with club-wielding security police.

After the group, led by several Buddhist monks, refused to disperse about a dozen club-wielding riot police formed a line across the road and started walking towards the crowd to force the people to leave.

"They want us to go home," a man told Reuters. "But the people are not satisfied and are not happy. They do not want to go home."

"Please report this," another told reporters. "People need to know what's going on inside here. We hate this government but cannot do anything about it."

Armenia's opposition rallies for 'non-violent change' in government



KIEV (R) — Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennady Udoenko urged Kiev and Moscow Friday to end a long-standing row over the Black Sea Fleet and rejected a top Russian politician's claims to the Ukrainian city where it is based.

with anti-Ukrainian content that make direct territorial claims to Ukraine. But we will not allow them to drag us into this game," Mr. Udoenko said.

Kiev and Moscow have been rowing ever since the Soviet Union fell apart in

sian nationalists argue the move did not affect Sevastopol's special status as a town directly subordinate to Kremlin authorities.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and Russian President Boris Yeltsin met in Moscow last week and

Viktor Chernomyrdin is expected to visit Kiev.

Talks began several years ago with Moscow insisting on a 50-year minimum lease. Mr. Yeltsin has cancelled at least six planned trips to Kiev to sign a friendship treaty over the row.

Talks are under way. Whatever we decide, we will definitely be criticised by some politicians. But we must put an end to this issue," Mr. Udovenko told a news conference.

Mr. Udovenko also responded angrily to an article by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, one of Russia's most powerful men and a possible contender in any presidential race, who called for Russia to lay claim to Sevastopol on the Crimean peninsula.

Mr. Luzhkov, evidently courting nationalist sentiment in Russia, argued in Thursday's *Izvestia* newspaper that Ukraine had no legal right to the city, saying: "Sevastopol had a history as a separate entity from the rest of the peninsula."

"There are many articles

1991 over how to split up the fleet of 600 naval vessels. Most of the argument has concerned the control of its bases in and around Sevastopol, rather than the ships themselves.

A senior Kiev diplomat told Reuters the Foreign Ministry was considering an appeal from pro-Kiev political organisations in Crimea to declare Mr. Luzhkov persona non grata in Ukraine.

Mr. Luzhkov has visited Sevastopol several times, offering food and financial aid to the fleet, in particular to its flagship, the helicopter carrier *Moskva*.

Russia seized Crimea from the Ottoman Empire in the 1780s and built the Sevastopol Naval Base almost immediately.

It transferred Crimea to Ukraine in 1954. But Russia

had resolved all problems surrounding the dispute, but that Sevastopol's status had been removed from the agenda.

Kiev is trying to satisfy the demands of a wide array of groups at home, from nationalists who want the fleet withdrawn to leftists who want a joint fleet under single command.

Ukrainian and Russian negotiators have agreed that Russia should lease Sevastopol for 20 years but Moscow wants to deduct rent payments from Kiev's huge energy debt to Russia.

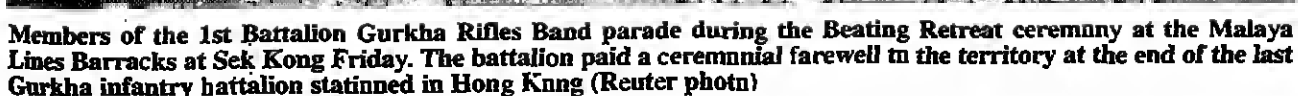
Russian and Ukrainian experts are due to meet in Moscow this weekend...to conclude a draft treaty on the base. Diplomatic sources said a deal could be signed on Nov. 15, when Russian Prime Minister

Kiev has made some ground in talks, winning a deal to base its navy's command in Sevastopol and its few dozen ships in at least one of the town's five bays.

The constitution, adopted four months ago, excludes foreign bases from Ukrainian soil but experts say 20 years would be enough for Russia to upgrade its existing base at Novorossiisk.

Meanwhile Russian navy officials are anxious to keep the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol.

"There are several reasons why the Black Sea Fleet cannot be based exclusively on the Russian coast," Fleet Commander Admiral Viktor Kravchenko was quoted as saying Thursday. "One of them is climate, especially heavy winds."



HONG KONG (R) — To the rattle of drums and the skirl of bagpipes, the last Gurkha infantry battalion in Hong Kong had a ceremonial farewell to the territory Friday and looked ahead to new assignments in Britain.

At sunset, the 700 members of the 1st battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles gathered on the field of their Malaya Lines Headquarters at Sek Kong for the traditional beating retreat.

With all the pomp and regalia of a military parade, the ceremony was also a night out for the battalion's own pipes and drums and the band of the brigade of Gurkhas, which was flown in from Britain.

But it was also a bittersweet send-off for some of the men after years in the territory.

"I'm sad to leave Hong Kong, I'm leaving very soon," Private Bijaya Pun said as he watched the ceremony.

Lance Corporal Deu Prasad Pun said going to Britain offered the chance for more training and better qualifications but he would miss weekend outings in the hills of Hong Kong's new territories.

The withdrawal comes as British forces pull out ahead of the handover of the territory to China next July 1.

Governor Chris Patten thanked the Gurkhas for their contribution since 1948 when they were first deployed in Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong has not been a field of battle but you have given no less a service, earned no less an honour, by unfailingly upholding peace and security here," Gov. Patten said in his address.

"You can properly say that you have been part of Hong Kong's achievement and it is right for Hong Kong to give you thanks."

The Gurkhas — Nepali soldiers renowned for their hardiness, loyalty and combat skills — fought alongside British troops during both world wars, in south-

east Asia against Communist rebels in the Malayan emergency of 1948-1960 and in the Falkland Islands in 1982.

They are also known for their wide-brimmed hats and long, curved knives called kukris.

Although Friday's farewell at Malaya Lines was largely ceremonial — the battalion leaves Hong Kong in stages over the course of November and December — it came as the final salute to some of the men who will not be making the trip to Britain.

"There are currently three Gurkha infantry battalions — one here, one in the U.K. and one in Brunei. Those are being amalgamated effectively down into two battalions," Major Jon Herring of the British Forces Hong Kong told Reuters.

"That will generate in the region of about a couple hundred redundancies, of which (the 1st Battalion's) share is 70."

Under the new scheme, the 1st battalion will remain a distinct entity within the 5th airborne brigade based in Aldershot, England. The 2nd battalion is to remain in Brunei, while the 3rd battalion will be disbanded and most of its men assigned to British units in need.

Warrant Officer Hom Gurung said he was sad some of the friends he had made in his 21 years in Hong Kong would not be joining him in Britain.

"This is because of the drawdown of the British army, he said. "That's the way it is."

The withdrawal of the 1st Battalion follows the lowering of the flag of the disbanded 67 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron, Queen's Gurkha Engineers, at Sek Kong in early September.

Earlier Friday, four of the six Wessex helicopters of the royal air force's 28 (army cooperation) squadron flew into Kai Tak Airport, where they will be based until the handover.

Pakistan | U.S., Russian negotiators fail

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan has rejected India's protest over the expulsion of a staffer of the Indian high commission in Islamabad, newspapers reported Saturday.

They quoted a Pakistani foreign office statement as saying India was making an unwarranted fuss over the expulsion of what it called a confirmed agent of India's research and analysis wing intelligence outfit who had been "caught red-handed while purchasing information from a local contact."

"The concern expressed by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs is misplaced," the statement said.

India protested to Pakistan Wednesday over its treatment of the non-diplomatic consular official, **Ashok Kumar Wahi**.

"The government of India lodges a strong protest against trespass by the intelligence agencies of Pakistan into the residence of Mr A.K. Wahi, the crimi-

nal assault on his family, his abduction, illegal detention and injuries inflicted on him as a result of severe beating," said a note handed to the Pakis-

tant High Commissioner in Delhi, Riaz Khokhar. Pakistan apparently ex-

Commission staffer in response to a similar action by New Delhi against a Pakistani High Commission staffer on Oct. 25.

The Foreign Office said Indian intelligence men had abducted the Pakistani staffer, Hafiz Mushtaq Ahmad Khoso, and physically man-handled and abused him before his release the next morning.

GENEVA (R) — American and Russian officials failed Saturday to wrap up an accord on regional missile defences, but a U.S. spokesman said that both sides had agreed to return to the negotiating table, to seal arms control accords.

A spokesman at the U.S. diplomatic mission could not say whether any progress had been made in the talks or just when the negotiations might resume in Geneva after an agreed "recess."

A signing ceremony planned Thursday was called off at the last moment, leading the United States and Russia to blame each other for the delay in agreeing which systems may be developed under the 1972

Negotiators worked flat out Friday to try to salvage the elusive deal, with the Russian side indicating its envoys intended to work over the weekend in the Swiss city.

But Saturday it was clear there had been no breakthrough. "The delegations have agreed to recess the current session. The meeting will resume when the recess ends, but it is not

Stanley Riveles, head of the U.S. delegation, and his aides were leaving Geneva

"We fully expect our delegation to return to Geneva, but right now it is too early to predict when it will be," he said.

"All governments are keeping in touch regarding when to lift the recess and resume the session. A date will be decided through diplomatic channels," the U.S. spokesman added.

The collapse of the deal — endorsed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov in New York on Sept. 23 — is a blow to the Clinton administration's efforts

Bus crash in Peruvian Andes kills 39

The bus drove off the narrow, winding central highway, and landed in a ditch, destroying the vehicle and injuring another person, police and hospital sources said.

Ticlio is one of the highest road passes in the world and is located about 119 kilometers east of Lima.

Friday's accident was the latest in a string of bad bus crashes this year in Peru

Local radio reports put the death-toll late Friday at 41. Another police source in La Oroya said the driver of the bus, which was en route to the town of Tarma, was killed. The bus, which was carrying 45 passengers, was heading south from the town of Tarma, which is about 100 km (60 miles) from the scene of the crash. The bus was carrying 45 passengers, including 30 children, and was heading south from the town of Tarma, which is about 100 km (60 miles) from the scene of the crash.

The bus rolled over and over as it fell down the abyss," highway police spokesman Marco Delgado, who visited the crash site, said. The bus, which was en route to the highland town of Tarma then the Eastern Jungle region, apparently fell asleep at his wheel.

told Reuters from the near- Police could not confirm people.

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Equality for all

THE INTENSE debate that was generated during the seminar on the election law, which was organised by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan last week, reflects the strong concern that Jordanians have towards the election law under which the coming parliamentary elections will be held in November next year.

Despite the differing opinions that were expressed during the seminar on "Electoral Law: Comparative Analysis," the majority of the participants in the debate appeared agreed on at least one thing: the current temporary election law which governed the 1993 elections is flawed, undemocratic. It must be amended.

But even though numerous electoral models were offered at the seminar, no consensus was reached on the suitability of any of these systems to Jordan. Differences remained. And that is natural.

Theoretical models can present broad frameworks that can be adapted to suit the local political environment and its particularities. The nature of the demographic composition, distribution and unique political considerations among others require that Jordan accounts for its own needs in its electoral system. This does not mean, however, that the basic democratic principles of equality among all Jordanians be compromised. The search should be for an election law that corresponds with the unique political environment of the country and ensures the progress of its democratic outlook by treating all Jordanians as equal citizens.

This means that the drafting of the new election law should not be the exclusive right of any part of the Kingdom's polity. The proposal by the seminar to set up a commission of experts and academicians to put forward a new election law should be taken seriously by the government which has the constitutional right to legislate.

Jordan needs a new, more democratic and more modern election law. The government has already started working on amending the current draft legislation. It should not rush into finalising it and presenting it to Parliament and it can certainly benefit from the views of experts on the issue.

The election law is an important legislation that can tremendously affect the democratic orientation of the country not just in terms of the legitimacy of the house that will be elected under it but also in terms of the people's confidence and faith in the process. The debate on the election law has shown that many Jordanians believe the current law is unfair, unsuitable and undemocratic. The new law should not be seen in the same way.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT IS because Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has realised that no progress whatsoever has been achieved from a month-long session of negotiations with the Israelis that he has finally announced that the talks were a total failure, said Al Ra'i daily Saturday. The paper said the Palestinian president realises also that any partial progress is worthless and that only when agreement has been reached on a settlement to all outstanding issues can he consider the U.S.-sponsored negotiations a success. It is to be noted that the Israeli intransigence at these negotiations in the past month were coupled with continued programmes of Jewish settlements in Palestinian lands and continued closure of the Palestinian territory, which created an atmosphere of tension that contributed to the abortion of these negotiations, said the paper. Observers must have noticed that the Palestinian negotiators have exercised self-restraint all this time not only to give the Israelis a chance to change their position and respect the peace accords drawn up in Oslo but also in order to expose Israeli's disregard for the stipulation of the peace accords before the Israeli public and the world at large, added the paper.

FAHEH FANEK, a writer for Al Ra'i, said Saturday that the idea of having a two-day weekend in Jordan does not suit the country which is still in the process of building its national economy. The writer expressed belief that such a system will negatively affect the interests of the private sector which the government seeks to boost in order to stimulate the national economy. According to the provisions of the new labour law, labourers must work 48 hours a week, but while this is feasible under the present system, it is inapplicable in a five-day working week, said the writer. Besides, in the case of a long holiday, many urgent matters or businesses would be delayed for two days. In addition, such a system would mean that more confusion occurs in the transport system and would cost the country more fuel consumption as some of the employees could opt to go home for lunch break. The writer said that a long workday would force many working women to quit their jobs and would deprive many employees of any part-time afternoon jobs that they may have at present.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Trade deficit soars beyond expectations

By Dr. Fahed Faneh

ONE OF the most important objectives of the economic adjustment programme agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the reduction of deficit in the current account of the balance of payments before grants and foreign aid. This reduction is obviously an indicator of self sufficiency and financial independence of the country.

Jordan advanced considerably in the direction of this ultimate objective during the past five years. Trade deficit narrowed gradually both in absolute volume or as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP), and the coverage ratio of foreign imports by national exports improved substantially.

Trade balance resulting from matching exports and imports, is an essential part of the balance of payments. Any improvement or deterioration in the trade balance is reflected in the current account of the balance of payments, as the trade deficit is the most important component of the balance of payments and must therefore be closely monitored monthly by policy makers.

During the first seven months of 1996, statistics revealed an unpleasant surprise. Imports increased by a full 25 per cent over the same period of 1995, while exports failed to grow by more than 10 per cent, thus giving rise to an increase of trade deficit by something like 36 per cent, a

set back for the previous years' achievements.

One may be pleased to notice the high growth rates of our imports and exports as an indicator of the extent of our economic openness towards the global market. However, the extreme disparity between growth rates of imports and exports, which means higher trade deficit, is a reason for worry.

There are of course some factors to explain an increase in imports, such as new projects which have to import expensive machines and equipment, the dealers of free zone areas which are reportedly buying commodities for re-export, and the Ministry of Supply which may be stockpiling huge amounts of wheat and fodder to protect consumers from an expected rise in international markets, the actual result being that it deprived consumers of the benefit of lower prices, especially regarding wheat.

These factors may explain part of, but not all the explosion in the volume of imports, especially when domestic industrial output, during the period under review, did not show a positive growth, as evidenced by the index of industrial output compiled monthly by the Central Bank.

On the other hand, the big jump in the size of imports could not be reconciled with the claims of economic recession or slowdown which is becoming a business culture,

even among the most successful businessmen, and in particular among traders and economically active players. The jump in imports means strong demand and higher purchasing power, hardly an indication of recession and slowdown as the complainers claim.

Fortunately the services sector showed an increasing surplus, which covers part of the commodity deficit and alleviates its impact on the balance of payments. However, the growth in the surplus of services, though welcome, is not enough to offset the increase in imports beyond expectations.

These are the bad news. The good news is that the increase in imports, and consequently the increase in trade deficit, was not accompanied by a depletion of the Central Bank's reserves of foreign exchange. If anything, the reserves improved a little, thanks to cash injections from the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union.

The jump in imports is a natural result of removing barriers and liberalisation of trade. It is a negative side effect of the reform prescribed by the IMF. The question is whether the bitter medicine will do the trick and raise the competitiveness of the Jordanian economy to an international standard to help it survive in the global market environment.

Changing of the congressional guard

— 'support for Israel will remain strong'

By Hillel Kuttler

ON NOVEMBER 6, mere hours after the election day results came in, Hank Brown and his daughter are due to jet off on a two-week vacation in Israel and Egypt.

After about a half-dozen official visits, Brown will be taking his first trip to the region as a private citizen. The Colorado Republican is retiring from Congress after 16 years, the last six as a senator.

Brown, 56, is one of 14 senators voluntarily leaving the job, marking the latest upheaval in a decade of institutional change in Congress.

Already, half the current members of the House and Senate arrived only since 1990. This is a shift with potentially profound consequences for Congress's relations with Israel, Capitol Hill observers say.

"I wouldn't say any of them stand out," said Chuck Brooks, executive director of the National Political Action Committee, when asked about the impact of this year's retiring representatives and senators on Middle East policy.

But the 104th session of Congress was "one of the most pro-Israel Congresses ever," said Mr. Brooks, whose organisation will disburse about \$600,000 to pro-Israel congressional candidates in both parties.

Even former majority leader and current Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole and others with mixed records on Israel were respected for their "seniority, experience and wisdom," a pro-Israel lobbyist said.

Others, such as Democrat Sam Nunn, an expert on defence matters, did not play a leading role on Israel-related issues but were looked to for the insight



they provided.

Most agree that Israel lost its greatest champion last year when Oregon Republican Robert Packwood was forced out of the Senate after a sex scandal.

And while hardly a flashy type, Mr. Brown established a strong pro-Israel record. Since the GOP assumed control of Congress following the 1994 election, Mr. Brown headed the Near East subcommittee. He made his mark in legislation encouraging economic ventures between Israel and its Arab partners in the peace process. Mr. Brown also wrote a key amendment aimed at weakening the Arab boycott of Israel.

Another key senator who is leaving is Rhode Island Democrat Claiborne Pell. He led the Foreign Relations Committee for eight years and was the panel's ranking Democrat in the years the Republicans were in the majority in the 1980s and 1990s.

Mr. Pell's strong ties to Israel are an outgrowth of his father Herbert's diplomatic efforts to prosecute Nazi war criminals. It is

such historical connectedness that is disappearing with the mass exodus from Capitol Hill this decade.

Other long-time friends of Israel now retiring from the Senate include Democrats Howell Heflin (Alabama), Paul Simon (Illinois), Bennett Johnston (Louisiana), James Exon (Nebraska) and Bill Bradley (New Jersey); and Republican William Cohen (Maine).

Among the 53 House seats opening up, Israel's most prominent loss is seen to be Texas Charlie Wilson, a key Democratic advocate for Israel-U.S. production of the Hav-Nap/Popeye and Arrow missile systems.

The 1990s have already seen vast turnover, with 119 new members entering the House following the 1992 elections and 86 after the 1994 elections.

Such dramatic reshuffling of the 435-seat chamber challenges organisations such as the American Israel Political Action Committee to forge bonds with newcomers early on.

As it did following the 1992 election, the pro-Israel lobbying group this year

met with nearly all of the candidates for congressional seats in order to begin establishing relationships for when the winners assume office.

The significance of the quickly approaching elections extends beyond the open seats, observers say. Several Senate incumbents who are reliable supporters of Israel are locked in tight races. They include Democrats Carl Levin of Michigan and Iowa's Tom Harkin, and Republicans Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Larry Pressley of South Dakota.

Other races too close to call are seen by pro-Israel observers as no-lose either way: Democrat incumbent Paul Wellstone versus Republican ex-senator Rudy Boschwitz in Minnesota; Democrat Robert Torricelli and Republican Dick Zimmer in a battle of congressmen vying for Bradley's seat; and Democrat incumbent John Kerry against Republican Governor William Weld in Massachusetts.

Strongly pro-Israel House incumbents, locked in to-

close-to-call races include Democrats Jane Harman (California), Paul McClellan (Pennsylvania), and Ike Skelton (Missouri) — all of whom serving on the national security committee — and Martin Frost (Texas); along with Republicans Jim Bunn (Oregon), Jon Fox (Pennsylvania), and New York's Peter King and Michael Forbes.

Those races will help determine whether the Republicans maintain control of the Senate, where they have a 53-47 majority, and the House, where they are ahead 235-198. If Democrats retake one or both houses, "there could be turmoil on our key committees," a pro-Israel activist said.

If the Republicans hold on in the Senate, one of Israel's greatest allies, Alaska's Ted Stevens (assuming he retains his seat), would take over the appropriations subcommittee. That is considered a monumental improvement over retiring Oregon Sen. Mark Hatfield, who compiled one of the worst voting records on Israel, particularly in the area of military aid.

If they retain their seats, Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond would continue chairing the foreign relations and armed services committees, respectively.

Should the Democrats wrest control, Levin could chair armed services with Delaware's Joseph Biden taking foreign relations and Hawaii's Daniel Inouye the defence appropriations subcommittee.

It would also mean that McConnell, who shielded Israel from cuts in the shrinking foreign-aid pie, would lose the foreign operations subcommittee chair. And one of Israel's arch foes, Robert Byrd of West Virginia, would again con-

trol the full appropriations committee.

A Democratic win in the House would diminish the clout of Israel's staunchest friend in Congress, Speaker Newt Gingrich, who was credited with steering the revolution-minded 1994 Republican freshmen towards support for the 1996 and 1997 foreign aid bills. It would also knock Senate majority leader Trent Lott down a notch.

In the House, a Democratic win would also elevate Israel foe David Bonior of Michigan to majority whip, albeit behind a staunchly pro-Israel speaker, Missouri's Dick Gephardt, currently the minority leader.

Under Democratic rule, Nancy Pelosi of California, who has a strong record on Israel, would take over the key foreign operations subcommittee, although in the last Congress, Alabama's Sonny Calhoun, the current chair, voted for his first-ever foreign aid bills.

Looking back on his career in both houses, Mr. Brown said: "I suppose I went into this as a strong supporter of Israel, but the chairmanship of the subcommittee gave me a chance to be a frontline player in some of the developments in the Middle East and took me from a supporter to an activist role."

He said he is confident that even with so many newcomers, Congress's support for Israel will remain strong.

"The group that leaves are very solid backers of Israel and the Middle East. But it seems to me our relationship is on very firm ground and won't be endangered by a change in personnel. I am not fearful at all."

The Jerusalem Post

Trade drive 'going into reverse' on ecology

By Geoff Tansey

THE DRIVE towards a global economy is unstoppable, according to World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director-General Renato Rugiero. It is not a question of whether globalisation will happen, he says, but of whether the process will be properly regulated.

This is one of the constant themes in his endless globe-trotting as he prepares the ground for the WTO's first ministerial meeting in Singapore in December.

However, not everyone shares his crusading zeal for the merits of his organisation, which came into existence in January 1995.

For many environmentalists, the WTO is a threat.

They argue that the organisation has been reluctant to allow environmental issues onto its agenda, and that its prevailing philosophy is to dismiss environmental considerations as a barrier to

trade.

Specifically, they are concerned that the trade rules which the organisation is charged with managing might undermine the international environmental treaties that have been painstakingly thrashed out in recent years.

Some of the treaties — such as the Basel Convention on trade in hazardous waste, the international agreement on trade in endangered species and the Montreal Convention on ozone depletion — refer to the possibility of trade sanctions as a punishment for failure to comply. Sanctions are considered necessary for enforcement, but are anathema to the WTO's free-trade thinking.

"The question is how far WTO rules need to be changed to allow environmental negotiations to put in trade measures," says Richard Eglin, who heads the organisation's trade and environment committee.

Mr. Eglin points out that in

the event of conflicts between treaties, international law gives precedence to the most recent accord. This is exactly what environmentalists fear, because the agreements they wish to protect were concluded before the establishment of the WTO.

Charles Arden-Clarke of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says the trade and environment committee has "gone into reverse" and that a number of countries represented in the committee have made proposals that could undermine the treaties.

A legal brief prepared by the WWF for the December ministerial meeting says the proposals would give the WTO the power to decide the level of environmental protection a country could regulate to achieve.

It also argues that too much emphasis is placed on "scientific evidence" rather than on the "precautionary principle" of giving the environment the benefit of the doubt when sci-

entific uncertainty exists.

Mr. Eglin admits that the setting up of his committee was virtually an afterthought in the nine-year Uruguay Round of trade talks, which led to the WTO's establishment.

"We're not an environmental organisation and not about to become one," he emphasises. But as a trade organisation, "we must see that WTO rules permit legitimate environmental policy to go on."

He says the committee "has been a major forum for discussion in the first two years" and will report to the ministers in Singapore on a range of issues, including eco-labelling and the export of goods from countries where their use is prohibited.

"Trade rules permit countries to compete honestly," he said. But these are contentious issues. On labelling, for example, the European Union can set criteria for recognising claims that timber products originate from sustainably

managed forests. But who decides what is "sustainable" when forest conditions are so different in, say, Finland and Brazil?

Regarding the export of goods prohibited in their country of manufacture, such as certain pesticides, most developing countries take the view that it is not for exporting nations to tell them what they can or cannot import. Instead, they favour better information so the least-developed countries know about what they are buying.

This is in line with the widespread suspicion among developing-country trade negotiators that environmental rules could be used by industrialised countries to keep their products out. They want growth and wealth creation to take priority over the environment.

Environmentalists are not reassured by the work of Eglin's committee or of the WTO as a whole.

The WWF's Arden-Clarke

says public access to WTO meetings and papers is tightly restricted — a criticism of the organisation's work from the outset. "Strengthening the impression that officials in WTO meetings are not listening to the outside world, is simply do not care what it thinks."

"The constructive engagement of the environmental community, initiated by the establishment of the committee on trade and environment, is now threatened," he says.

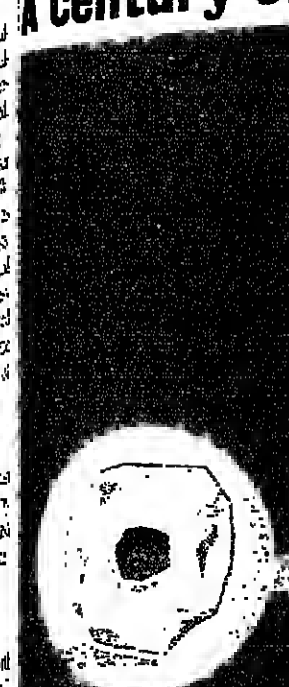
"There is now a genuine danger that the committee will not only fail to deliver an environmental reform of the WTO," he adds, "but rather will turn into a springboard for an attack" on international environmental approaches.

Geoff Tansey is a writer and journalist, specialising in food, agriculture and development. He is co-author of a book, *The Food System — A Guide*. This article is reprinted from Gemini News Service.

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JORDAN TIM

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Future tense or future perfect — predictions that cannot be made

By Euan Ferguson

THERE WAS, sadly, no future in it. The Centre for Futures Research at the University of Southern California has closed, apparently through lack of interest.

Futurologists, at first sight, have been having something of a hard time. This "centre," 10 years ago, tried to predict what would be happening now, and while it got it about right with e-mail and electronic manacles, we're still waiting for wristwatch telephones, electronic nannies and a cure for AIDS.

Predictions can look desperately naive and bathetic in hindsight, and few more so than those made in the first flush of the space race, when sci-fi anoraks were lauded as sudden experts and treated, according to writer Brian W. Aldiss, as "alchemists whose lead of fantasy had turned into the gold of knowledge."

"We'll have a man on Mars by 1984," said U.S. Vice-President Spiro Agnew (and "I will not resign," said his boss, one Richard Nixon).

Today, Europe has just blown up her flag-ship spacecraft, the U.S. is using life on Mars to make a political point, and

in Russia spacesuits are on sale on the black market for less than Armani jackets. The most sonorous legacy of the lunar programme, for most of us, is Teflon pans.

It is tempting, for the cynic, to argue there are no longer any big ideas, any quantum leaps of imagination, after a century of astonishing change. That all we have been doing is refining our most useful inventions — smaller TVs, whizzier telephones, faster computers, safer cars and planes — rather than taking civilisation forward with other breakthroughs of similar magnitude to the internal combustion engine, powered flight, electricity or antibiotics. That our grandparents wit-

nessed more spectacular changes in the first half of this century — moving from gas mantles, horse-drawn transport and rampant disease to the nuclear family of the fifties — than baby-boomers have in the second. That there is nothing left to astonish us.

Significantly, the scientists' treasured comeback to such charges — the tale of the British patents officer who resigned in 1896, saying there was "nothing left to invent" — was recently demolished as nothing more than a myth by John Horgan, writer on Scientific American, who is about to publish a book entitled *The End of Science: Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of the Scientific Age*, in

which he will argue that much research is now "ironic science," gazing backward at ever more Byzantine and unprovable theories, rather than applied science which might actually be useful.

All of which might be a tempting theory for those approaching the millennium in a bad mood. Scientists see it somewhat differently.

"There has been more progress in the last 25 years than in the preceding 25,000," says Ian Pearson, a futurologist at BT's advanced research centre in Suffolk. He cites the leaps in computerchip technology that have taken place, unforeseen, over the past 10 years alone; and, while accepting the impact

may have seemed less because the changes were incremental rather than fundamental, argues that, with computing power doubling every 18 months, we will have computers equal in intelligence to the human brain "in about 20 years ... We will then be able to progress in even more astonishing leaps, through this super-brain — in genetics, medicine, transport. We are already on a cliff. We are just about to jump off."

Professor David Gann, professor of innovative manufacturing at the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University, the world's main centre for the study of future trends, dismisses speculation that innovation is dying. He

says such progress normally occurs in 50-year cycles and it takes a long time for each development — coal power, electricity, the telephone, the computer chip — to filter through to a wider public. There has to be a need, an "economic driver" which, coupled with a "bandwagon effect," pushes inventions on until they fill civilisation; and then, improved to the final degree, they become part of our heritage. We are witnessing, for instance, the "last gasp" of the automobile.

He sees us now as about 20 years into an age defined by the computer chip. When it will end is hard to say; the 50-year cycle may be getting faster, because of the

exponential increase in the power of thought.

One of the main areas of excitement identified by him and others is biotechnology. Few scientists are keen to go on the record with specific predictions, but biotechnology (the fusion of man and machine), genetics (with all the moral quandaries involved), and nanotechnology (with its implications for manufacturing; when in full swing, it is predicted, items can be built up from atoms rather than created by "chopping up" existing structures) are the three that keep coming round.

In the next 20 years or so we have to embrace the boom in information technology, Richard Harris,

chief technology officer at The Digital Village, the multi-media publishing company set up by, among others, Douglas Adams, is disparaging about the cynic's conviction that IT can never replace physical manufacturing. "They said, at the start of the manufacturing revolution, that it would kill agriculture: who was going to work in the fields, if they all went into the towns to work in factories? Agriculture was then revolutionised, and in the same way."

And as for the patent office story? Okay, so scientists invented it. That is, after all, their job...

The Observer

A century of invention...now what?



Money-saver bread brings new flavour to savour

By Emad S. Mekay

EGYPTIANS CRAVING for government-subsidised wholemeal flour bread will soon have to adjust to a new taste.

The government is replacing 20 per cent of the staple product mix with domestic — and cheaper — corn flour. The new bread mix costs the government less to produce, but the savings will not be passed on. And that is causing worries that people will again take to the streets in protest.

Bread is a sensitive issue in the region. In 1977, Egyptian rioters forced the government to revoke a bread price hike. Recent riots in Jordan were believed to have been sparked by rises in bread prices.

"Just by mentioning the word price, without even

saying whether the new bread prices will be lower or higher than the current ones, you create horror among consumers," said a ministry official. "Consumers here regard any new experiment as against them even when in fact it is to their own advantage."

A World Bank and International Monetary Fund economic reform programme has removed subsidies on a variety of food items in recent years without public protest. Yet Ministry of Supply officials are careful not to say explicitly that the bread experiment is economically driven.

"The aim is not to cut subsidies. The aim is to reach self-sufficiency. We do not know what international suppliers will do with prices in the future," says the first undersecretary at the Ministry of Supply, Alaa Al

Khouli.

The new blend was given a three-month trial in Cairo last year, which officials described as a success — that is, consumers did not notice the difference. From December, the ministry will reintroduce the blend on a wider scale.

But though customers in the trial area say they were not aware of the switch, they are suspicious that the government is tampering with the mix and they complain bread quality is getting worse.

"Of course this is bad bread," observes bakery owner Mohammad Iwedia, displaying a flat loaf instead of a 100 per cent wheat loaf considered to have more consumer appeal. Iwedia says quality has fallen because of bad quality flour. "What can I do? I would bake anything the

government gives me, even if they ask us to bake dust."

In October, Minister of Supply Ahmad Al Gewili announced the allocation of 10 million Egyptian pounds for the purchase of 500,000 kilograms of corn from farmers for the new bread mix.

The assumption is that farmers will grow more in the knowledge that the government will buy the crop. Wheat imports will be frozen at their current level, 6.5 million tonnes a year, saving the government millions of dollars in additional wheat purchases.

"The input for this shift will come entirely from domestic production," says Alaa Al Khouli.

The target is to increase domestic corn production from 5.5 million tonnes a year to 6 million to meet rising demand created by an

annual population increase of 1.3 million.

Rising incomes have also caused changes in consumption patterns. Meat production, for example, has outstripped cereal output, which has entailed a significant diversion of food supplies from humans to animals: to produce one kilogramme of red meat requires 10 kilograms of cereals.

Officials say the increased output will come mainly from the introduction of high-yielding seeds and through benefits derived from better extension advice to farmers.

"For the consumer, the new kind of bread will be no more expensive," says Ahmad Khorshed, director of Food Technology Research Institute, which made the studies for the plan.

"Corn has many advantages over wheat. First, the same area of land would yield twice as much corn as wheat. Corn can be grown twice a year. You can also extract oil from corn, which makes it more profitable to grow."

The government was prompted to act by spiralling international wheat prices. After the United

States and West Europe agreed to end their subsidies to wheat farmers in 1995, prices rocketed from approximately \$100 a tonne to \$24 per tonne.

Responses from the United States grain industry — Egypt's biggest supplier, at

Wheat Associates, an organisation representing American wheat-sellers, said: "Twenty per cent is a high percentage when you take into account the fact that the corn flour will be mixed with an already not-very-high quality wheat flour."

The new bread would have less ability to stay fresh, he argued, so there would be more wastage.

Dick Prior, the organisation's regional director for the Middle East and East Africa, said he was not bothered by the possible loss of exports, but doubted that consumers would like the new mix. He also argued that surplus worldwide wheat production would soon push prices down.

Gemini News Services

Israel says Hebron deal to be signed in Cairo

(Continued from page 1)

dent Hosni Mubarak on Saturday to give him a message from Mr. Arafat, who saw Mr. Mubarak in Cairo on Friday.

"This Israeli government... is acting, to be quite frank, against everything that was agreed and against the whole peace process, not only on the Palestinian track but also on the Syr-

ian and Lebanese tracks," Mr. Erakat said.

"It has been carrying out campaigns of widespread deception since the moment the talks started, either by making accusations against the Palestinian side or by inventing problems with Egypt and the states of the region generally," he added.

KDP objects to key points of Ankara accord

(Continued from page 1)

has been urging the Kurds to find a reconciliation which would keep out Baghdad.

The KDP and PUK have jointly controlled northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war.

But their fragile power-sharing agreement broke down into armed conflict in May 1994 and an estimated 2,500 people have been killed in the ensuing conflict.

Peres assails Netanyahu over Shohor suspension

(Continued from page 1)

tlar Nachum Kurman, Kurman, chief of security in the Jewish settlement of Hader-Betar, was charged Friday with manslaughter for allegedly knocking down the boy, kicking him and then striking him fatally with the butt of a pistol.

Korman, who faces up to 20 years in jail if convicted, has denied killing Hilmi Shusha, a 10-year-old from the West Bank town of Husan near Bethlehem.

About 250 people, including Israeli and Palestinian legislators, gathered in Husan Satur-

day to hold a memorial service for Shusha. Signs saying "settlements are time bombs for peace," and "Hilmi your blood was not spilled in vain" were hung among Palestinian flags and pictures of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

"I am for a Palestinian state and I take risks," said dovish Israeli legislator Yael Dayan. "But why should this child have to risk his life? He was just a child. The whole thing is going on a terrible direction."

King, Crown Prince and Primakov discuss peace process, progress in multilaterals

(Continued from page 1)

well as non-regional parties together in joint ventures as well as state-funded infrastructure projects.

The Crown Prince also reviewed with the Russian minister the multilateral discussions on issues such as refugees, water, disarmament and the environment.

Attending the meeting was Mr. Kabariti.

Also expected to have been discussed by Mr. Primakov while in Amman were prospects to increase Jordanian-Russian trade, which

now stands at around \$50 million a year.

Jordan has settled all its debts owed to the former Soviet Union, which the Russian federation inherited.

Jordan paid part of the debt in cash at a discounted rate and agreed to settle the rest in Jordanian exports.

Shortly after arrival on Friday, Mr. Primakov held talks with Mr. Kabariti on the peace process and bilateral relations.

While affirming the quest for a stronger

Russian role in the Middle East peace process, Mr. Primakov had also been careful to assert that the hoped-for role would not be in competition with the U.S. but rather complementary to the American effort.

The U.S. and Russia are co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, but Moscow has been sidelined by American diplomacy since the Arab-Israeli negotiations were launched in 1991.

JORDAN TIMES
684311- 699634

Large turn-out expected at Mideast economic conference

CAIRO (AFP) — More than 3,000 delegates from 80 countries are expected to take part in the third Middle East and North Africa economic conference here later this month, officials said Saturday.

"The Cairo conference will be marked by a much larger participation than at the previous conferences in Casablanca and Amman" in 1994 and 1995 respectively, said Rauf Saad, deputy foreign minister for regional economic cooperation.

"Three thousand participants coming from nearly

80 countries" are expected at the conference between Nov. 12 and 14, Mr. Saad told the government Al-Ahram daily.

"The opening session will be based on the theme of 'peace and economic development' and will be formally inaugurated by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak," said Mr. Saad.

He added that "the participation of Asian countries will be stronger" and that conference organisers had also noticed "the participation of African countries, which is new."

Conference organisers World Economic Forum said in a statement earlier this month that Egypt had sent out invitations to 87 countries, including Israel, and to heads of 47 regional and international organisations.

Mr. Saad said the Egyptian private and public sectors would put forward nearly 200 investment projects at the conference — in the fields of agriculture, industry, transport and energy — worth around \$30 billion.

Egyptian Tourism Minister Mamduh Al Beltagui told Al-Ahram that three large tourism projects worth \$1.6 billion would also be presented.

He said they involved the building of four five-star tourism villages in the Foka region on the Mediterranean coast around 670 kilometres northwest of Cairo, a sporting centre at Rosette in the Nile Delta north of Cairo and the setting up of wildlife safaris in the desert of southeast Egypt.

European nations get tougher on unemployment — study

PARIS (AFP) — European nations have got stricter on the unemployed under the twin pressures of higher jobless rates and the pressing need to rein in budget deficits, according to a study by France's unemployment benefit office UNEDIC.

In recent years, countries have introduced reforms to reduce benefits to the jobless, strengthen controls and toughen up eligibility requirements, according to the study of 16 countries — the 15 European Union (EU) member states plus Norway.

Latest figures from Brussels show that the EU had 17.9 million unemployed workers at the end of July or 10.7 per cent of the work force.

UNEDIC pointed to a "new philosophy" in force since 1993, the idea that workers must accept a suitable job offered by the social welfare agencies or risk a penalty — such as a five to 10 per cent reduction in benefits under rules in the Netherlands.

In Europe, the proportion of unemployment payments varies between 30 per cent of the reference salary in Italy to 90 per cent in Denmark.

This philosophy of "suitable employment" is being used increasingly by governments as a means to bring down the jobless rate while bringing their budget deficits into balance.

But as the pool of unemployed people grows, the idea of "suitable" work has

been enlarged so that in countries such as Belgium, Germany and Sweden, they have to accept a job that is less well paid or for which they are over qualified.

Britain has gone even further under a 1989 social security law which says the unemployed have to give valid reasons to justify refusing any job offered.

The study also noted that during 1994 and 1995, governments in the more developed countries also began redeploying unemployed allowances to subsidise jobs.

U.N. study shows drastic slowdown of Palestinian economy

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian economy has suffered a drastic slowdown during the past four years with gross domestic product (GDP) falling 23 per cent during the period, according to a U.N. study released Saturday.

Per capita income fell by 39 per cent between 1992 and September

1996 and unemployment rose from 10 per cent of the active population to 30 per cent, according to the U.N. special coordinator for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The number of people seeking work, meanwhile, increased by 8.5 per cent this year, in large part because of the pressure on women and chil-

dren to find a job, the report said.

Net income has fallen by 20 per cent since early 1995, the coordinator's office said.

It said household consumption fell by 10 per cent since the end of last year because of the increase in the number of unemployed and the drop in income.

The report said that since the first regional economic conference on the Middle East in October 1993, donor countries have given more than \$1 billion to the Palestinian National Authority for development projects. It stressed the negative impact of Israel's frequent closures of the Palestinian territories.

Bangladesh looking for new job markets

DHAKA (IRI) — Bangladesh, faced with a shrinking job market for millions of its people in the Middle East and Gulf states, is seeking employment for them elsewhere, state minister for labour and manpower M. A. Mannan has said.

He said the necessity for new job markets had become more pressing after tens of thousands of Bangladeshis were forced to leave the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to escape a tough new immigration law.

"We are knocking at all prospective doors for jobs for our workers," Mr. Mannan told Reuters.

Some 33,000 Bangladeshis returned home from the UAE, government officials said.

Some two million expatriate Bangladeshis sent home over \$1.2 billion in 1995, and the government is trying to keep the inflow of remittances intact, they said.

"We are searching alternative employment sources in east and south east Asia, Africa and even in Europe. Remittances bring 41 per cent of our total annual foreign exchange incomes," Mr. Mannan said.

He named Malaysia, South Korea, Mauritius, Brunei, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan and South Africa as some of the possible destinations for the country's workforce, estimated at about 25 million.

"Jobs in these countries are remunerative. We are trying through diplomatic and other channels for

employments there," Mr. Mannan said.

Officials said nearly two million Bangladeshis were working overseas, with some 40 per cent of them in Saudi Arabia alone.

Bangladesh started sending skilled and unskilled workers abroad officially in 1987.

Since then, expatriate workers have sent home some \$12.5 billion in foreign exchange, official figures show.

But many workers have also returned home after their contracts expired and some 64,000 fled Kuwait and Iraq during the 1990 Gulf war.

Bangladesh, already worried over the UAE clampdown, is now faced with the prospect of a large-scale expulsion of its workers

from Malaysia.

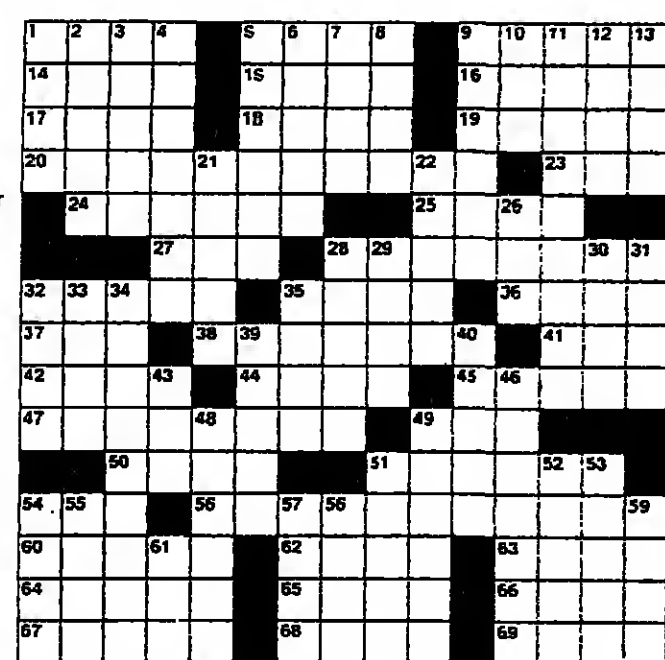
Government officials said more than 100,000 Bangladeshis currently work in Malaysia's factories and plantations, but many of them could be forced to leave because they lacked valid travel or work permits.

Malaysia said recently that it would review its overseas labour recruitment policy after receiving complaints that foreign workers, specially from Bangladesh, had been involved in altercations with the local population.

But Mr. Mannan described this as "scattered individual crime" and said Malaysian law should deal with the culprits but not penalise all Bangladeshis.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Sharp insult
 - Type of judgment
 - Letter on a key
 - Not Tina, not Ted
 - Soliloquy opener
 - Molding ridge
 - Vocal
 - Khayyam
 - Unrestrained outbreaks
 - Degree of heat
 - Tank
 - Tars and gobs
 - Data, informally
 - "My country"
 - Arrows, bullets, etc.
 - Pole used in Scottish games
 - Fabric with metallic threads
 - Departed
 - Tempe school leavers
 - Young kids
 - compos mentis
 - Christian: abbr.
 - Discharge
 - Handle
 - Kneecaps
 - Coal measure
 - Actor Jennings of old
 - Kishke coverings
 - Make mistakes
 - Agreement
 - Bible book
 - Goosey mud
 - Corrida loser, usually
 - Computer device
 - out (supplemented)
 - Churchill follower
 - Trembling tree
 - Funny Jay
 - Bishnops



by Harvey L. Chew

3 "What's in —?"
4 Inspect by touch
5 Hoards
6 "— is an island"
7 Blind as —
8 Pizarro's conquest
9 Black and Carpenter
10 Onassis, briefly
11 Smoked cheese
12 Pocket bread
13 Subordinate: abbr.
21 Arab chieftains
22 Part of a flight
26 Modesty leaf
28 Song thrush
29 — a man with...
30 Chemical compound
31 Transmil
32 Bivouac
33 Confused
34 Yellow flower
35 Monk
39 Greeting to Dolly

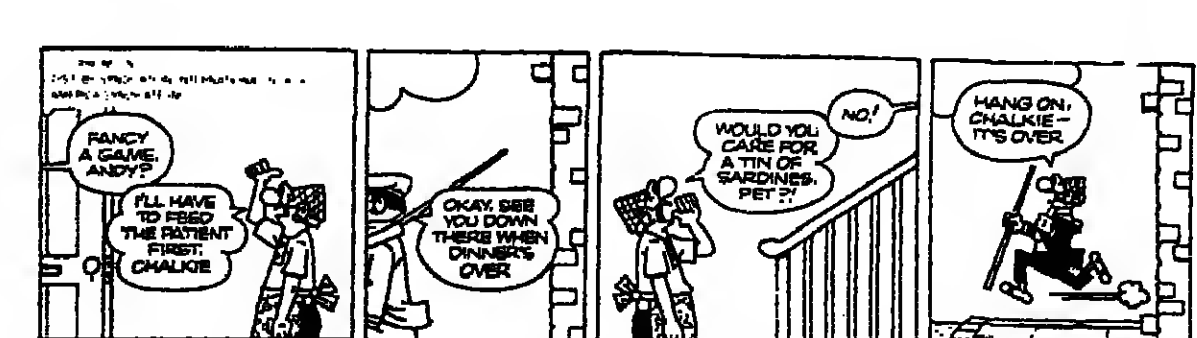
40 Excalibur
43 Haw's companion
46 Rock growth
48 Shipworm
51 Baker's —
52 Battery terminal
53 Loose rock debris
54 Mme Bovary
55 Rivers Sp.
57 Coward
58 Solid fuel
59 Time divisions
61 Enzyme ending

Jordan Times
Tel:
684311-699634

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can get early action today in whatever monetary interests you have in mind and get good results with them. Later this evening you will be able to complete some important new career activities with some assistance.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It is less difficult today to come to a better understanding with others, especially with those whose views have been different. This evening you should spend some quality time with your loved ones in some fun activities.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you acquire more data concerning your career activities today, you can gain greater benefits from your routine duties. This evening could be spent with close friends in some fun activities which everyone will enjoy.

MOON: (June 22 to July 21) Plan how to have more entertainment during this celestial period and it will make you happier. If you are able to meet with some knowledgeable person who can help with some new project, by all means take advantage of the situation.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Handle home affairs in a confident manner today and improve the situation there. Invite people in to solve difficulties which are present with your loved ones this evening and the situation will be resolved quickly.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Try to acquire the information you may need to solve some difficulty very easily today. Endeavour to gain greater prestige with the public this evening, by participating in some civic activities which will be beneficial.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Study every possible manner today, through which you can add to your present income and add to your present prestige. Later this evening will be good for attending some social function with close friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Put that plan to work which can gain you your cherished desires today and they are soon yours. Socialise later this evening with fellow business associates and you will be able to gain much success through the right contacts.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Concentrate more on activities which are vital to your welfare and stop daydreaming so much or you could be in serious difficulty with those in authority. Later this evening you can spend time with close friends.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get your personal aims clear in your mind so that today you can soon attain them. Join with good friends later this evening in some fun activities which will be enjoyed by all and forget about career activities for the moment.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This celestial period is such whereby you can gain much energy to go after your finest ambitions and make real progress today. Later this evening you can finally complete some important project with some assistance.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You want to gain more knowledge today and you should go after it with more enthusiasm and open-mindedness. Make new contacts later this evening and you will be able to make great progress with the association.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

Business

Dutch deal with Jord

AL SALAKH, the general manager of Finance Bank, also joined in describing the latest measures to liberalise the capital market for banking operations as a move to give more freedom to banking citizens and the Jordanian economy.

Mr. Salakh was not happy to place 14 per cent of foreign deposits under a reserve requirement, especially when such a reserve interest under the previous law was 35 per cent. He noted that the new measure would give foreign currency deposits a higher rate of interest, which would encourage foreign currency deposits.

Sallakh, Far fore interest on currency deposits

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Dutch delegation hold talks with Jordanian businessmen

AMMAN (Petra) — A visiting Dutch delegation representing the business community in a number of cities in the Netherlands met Saturday with the chairman and members of the board of the Jordanian

Businessmen Association (JBA) and voiced the keenness of the Dutch business people to bolster contacts with their Jordanian counterparts.

Noting that the Netherlands and Jordan maintain excellent diplomatic relations, the delegation stressed that the two sides can further strengthen economic ties through trade exchanges.

JBA Chairman Hamdi Tabbaa urged the Dutch to invest in Jordan noting that the country enjoys stability and security and offers incentives for the investors.

Mr. Tabbaa indicated that a recent package of laws on privatisation and liberalisation of the national economy are intended to attract investors from the Arab and

foreign countries.

Referring to the JBA's activities, Mr. Tabbaa said that it has been expanding its activities and creating business councils with 14 Arab and foreign nations, including five in Europe.

But, he noted that further efforts should be made in order to help adjust the balance of trade which is heavily in favour of the Netherlands.

He said this can be achieved through joint investment projects and more sales of Jordanian national products to the Netherlands.

Mr. Tabbaa expressed hope that Jordan's affiliation to the European union will help boost trade exchanges between the two countries.

Arab banks seen needing mergers to compete

MANAMA (R) — Gulf banks should merge and liberalise the congested sector to compete with international banks but experts have expressed doubt that such policies would be implemented.

"To merge in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries is not easy because many banks are owned by the government or families... to merge among those banks is a rather unrealistic story," Yoh Kurosawa, chairman of the Industrial Bank of Japan Limited told Reuters.

"How many bank's shares are listed on stock markets? Very few. The largest bank is the national commercial bank of Saudi Arabia and 98 per cent is owned by the Mahfouz family," he added.

Mr. Kurosawa echoed assertions by other leading bankers at the GCC banking conference in Manama

that the region's over 100 indigenous banks need to merge in order to boost their capital bases and offer more sophisticated services.

They said the failure of Arab banks to shed traditional commercial banking services and open up their markets to international banks threatens to marginalise the region's numerous banks.

"GCC financial and monetary planners must shed the psychological fear that market access to outsiders is dangerous, that free competition may play havoc to a fledgling banking system," Sheikh Ahmad Abdul Latif, chief executive of Arab Banking Corporation, told the conference.

"Mergers have to be encouraged to build stronger regional financial institutions, and weed out weak ones through a

process of consolidation, capital injections..." Mr. Abdul Latif stressed.

He underlined the fact that Saudi interests must own 60 per cent of equity in banks in the kingdom and new foreign banks are not allowed in the market.

The banking sector is also closed to foreign participation in Kuwait.

Bahrain restricts foreign banking to the formation of offshore units or representative offices.

Foreign banks are allowed to operate in Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, but Mr. Abdul Latif stressed that "new foreign banks are effectively prevented from establishing operations since the author-

ities believe their countries are over-banked."

Experts said it will be difficult to break tradition in the GCC, an economic and political alliance of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman.

"I don't see any signs that these mergers will take place. It's a matter of culture and it's a new concept. The danger is that you are limiting your resources," said one Bahraini banker who requested anonymity.

Abdulla Saleh Al Khalaf, assistant to the GCC secretary general noted that despite substantial foreign reserves, Gulf banks were not ranked among the world's top 100 banks.

Daily

A review of news from the Arabic press

Sallakh, Far foresee lower interest on foreign currency deposits

** ADNAN AL Sallakh, the general manager of the Export and Finance Bank, also joined other bank chiefs in describing the latest measures by the Central Bank to liberalise the capital market and open wider scope for banking operations as positive. He said that these measures would give further reassurance to the Jordanian citizens and the investor and would encourage shifting foreign currency deposits to dinar deposits.

However, Mr. Sallakh was not happy with the decision to place 14 per cent of foreign currency deposits without earning interest as a reserve at the Central Bank especially when such a reserve earned adequate interest under the previous regulation although the percentage then was 35 per cent of deposits. He noted that the new measures will increase the cost of foreign currency deposits at the banks especially those which have large dollar portfolios.

Despite this remark, Mr. Sallakh indicated that the Central Bank moves are seen within the framework of backing the process of shifting foreign currency deposits to dinar deposits which enjoy higher interest rate. "Such a process will lead to support the Kingdom's reserves of foreign currencies," he stressed.

Edward Al Far, the deputy executive president at the BritishBank said the banks were hoping for a reduction in the reserve requirement to 14 per cent but with interest. He explained that an interest-free reserve would increase the banks' costs of the deposits and such a situation may not permit the banks to pay interest on foreign currency deposits at rates better than what prevails in international markets. This matter would leave the depositors with two options: Either switch foreign currency deposits to dinar deposits or moving it to outside markets, Mr. Far said.

The senior BritishBank official noted that the Central Bank has allowed banks to extend 50 per cent of their foreign currency deposits in loans to the tourism and export-oriented sectors without obtaining the prior approval of the Central Bank whose approval was needed for other sectors. In its latest memorandum, Mr. Far said, the Central Bank did not mention the specifics of lending to "other sectors."

Mr. Far revealed the volume of foreign currency deposits at the banks have reached about 40 per cent of total deposits. He clarified that some of those deposits belonged to returnees from Arab Gulf countries waiting to seize good investment opportunities. Other deposits Mr. Far added, belonged to persons who prefer to keep their savings in foreign currencies for various reasons. As such, the volume of deposits in foreign currencies in Jordan is large, he indicated.

Total deposits at banks stood at JD 5.96 billion at the end of July 1996. Out of this total, JD 2.318 billion were in foreign currency (Al Aswag).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"My life didn't turn out the way I thought it would. I thought all my problems would be resolved in 30 minutes."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Asgharian

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VEYHA



RAICH

WABILE

NOPHTY

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: ARIPE PIECE MOTIVE FRUGAL
Answer: Why the Sarge didn't pavesdrop on the recruits' remarks - THEY WERE 'PRIVATE'

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIKKISANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 02/11/1996											
											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	OIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
252.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	13.5	1.42	3	120	29640	347.00	247.30	-	
1.250	1.880	MID-EAST INV.BK.	69.0	0.00	24	17000	28030	1.06	2.06		
3.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	5.0	6.36	4	1250	4040	2.15	2.19	0.04	
5.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.8	2.88	2	2100	5250	4.80	4.90	0.10	
3.040	2.550	JOR. TRAVEL BANK	18.6	0.00	4	179	459	2.65	2.57	-0.08	
1.200	890	JOR. GULF BANK	5.4	7.69	9	16850	15334	9.1	9.1	0.00	
4.280	3.300	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.8	0.00	5	935	3454	3.70	3.11	-0.59	
3.800	3.000	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	17.4	0.00	2	321	1029	3.20	3.11	-0.09	
1.650	1.000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	2	102	134	1.33	1.33	0.00	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 189.03		%CHG: -0.05		\$5	35457	77401			
4.550	4.000	JERUSALEM INSUR.	12.4	4.40	1	350	1593	4.55	4.55	0.00	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 119.26		%CHG: 0.00		1	350	1593			
1.900	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.0	7.59	8	1793	2832	1.59	1.58	-0.01	
2.800	2.050	SHIPPING LINES	10.7	7.87	6	11850	30099	2.52	2.54	0.02	
2.020	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	11	2510	2981	1.17	1.18	0.01	
1.260	890	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	32.9	0.00	3	287	183	64	1.04	0.04	
3.660	3.130	ARAB INTL. INV. EDCC.	13.8	5.75	5	976	3395	3.30	3.46	0.16	
1.310	960	ZAKIA EDUCATION	9	0.00	2	1500	1680	1.13	1.12	-0.01	
2.430	1.700	UNITED CO.	9.1	5.78	5	700	225	1.74	1.73	-0.01	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.29		%CHG: -0.15		40	19615	62364			
3.770	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.9	3.02	7	654	2161	3.33	3.31	-0.02	
3.550	2.710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	32.9	0.00	3	333	1013	3.05	3.06	0.01	
5.960	4.780	ARAB POTASH CO.	17.0	3.57	5	7491	42290	5.60	5.50	-1.00	
10.550	9.720	JOR. PETROLEUM REFINERY	9	6.70	4	1050	9611	9.20	9.10	-1.00	
3.750	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMH. MGR.	28.2	0.00	1	500	1050	2.15	2.10	-0.05	
4.870	3.100	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	17.7	6.21	57	8932	28997	3.29	3.22	-0.07	
2.600	2.050	JORDAN DALRY	13.5	6.82	2	1150	2510	2.25	2.20	-0.05	
8.000	4.250	DAR ADUNA OV. INV.	12.3	0.00	1	50	225	4.50	4.50	0.00	
5.800	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.7	8.60	1	150	524	3.49	3.49	0.00	
1.960	1.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	47	40500	24300	59	60	0.01	
2.890	2.580	GENERAL INVESTMENT	7.3	4.95	1	250	758	2.89	1.03	-1.86	
1.300	1.060	ARAB PAPER CONTY.	7.9	0.01	1	100	115	1.15	1.15	0.00	
1.090	580	NATIONAL INDS.	8.7	10.17	11	3600	2124	59	59	0.00	
1.840	1.980	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	500	496	99	1.00	0.01	
1.150	820	JOR. ROCKWELL ENDS.	9	0.00	8	2950	2463	85	83	-2.00	
3.280	1.480	UNIV. MOD. INDS.	4.6	13.23	3	1550	2330	1.51	1.50	-0.01	
2.100	1.140	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	17.3	0.00	3	550	761	1.39	1.38	-0.01	
1.580	890	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.4	0.00	3	1250	1225	90	90	0.00	
1.460	1.710	EL. & TEL. REPAIR WORK	9	0.00	3	3600	3680	68	63	-5.00	
1.480	1.030	INTL. TOBACCO	25.6	0.00	11	8250	9011	1.09	1.09	0.00	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 110.57		%CHG: -0.16		172	81810	135562			
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 147.97		%CHG: -0.10		268	140233	256920			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 02/11/1996											
1.790	1.480	CENTRAL GER. STORAGE	18.9	0.00	3	3330	1528	48	47	-0.01	
1.950	1.440	KATL. CONCRETE CENTERS	12	0.00	12	11600	5860	48	42	-6.00	
1.930	1.700	UNION INV. 502	69.8	0.00	4	8000	1840	72	73	0.01	
1.110	1.470	ARAB FEN. INVEST.	9	0.00	12	5600	2244	49	49	0.00	
1.950	1.770	AL-DANILAN 715	9	0.00	27	53315	28533	61	60	-1.00	
1.640	1.340	UNITED FOR FINAN. INV.	9	0.00	2	750	788	1.00	1.10	0.10	
1.690	1.510	JOR. INDS. MATCH-VENTO	9	0.00	1	100	38	37	38	0.01	
1.690	1.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	5	2345	1371	59	52	-7.00	
1.700	1.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	1	50	23	46	45	-1.00	
1.020	520	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	2	2500	1500	59	60	0.01	
1.100	510	NATL. MULT. ENT. NAMICO	9	0.00	4	823	419	51	51	0.00	
1.080	750	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	5	1500	7255	76	77	0.01	
1.850	1.620	RAZI PAPER 65	9	0.00	1	400	404	61	61	0.00	
1.830	1.470	INDS. ENG.	26.5	0.00	73	14700	6366	63	63	0.00	
1.430	1.730	INDS. CERAMIC	9	0.00	4	3800	3079	61	62	0.01	
1.690	1.380	T. TEXTILE MANUF.	9	0.00	1	200	200	38	36	-2.00	
1.890	1.610	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	7	7254	454	63	63	0.00	
1.950	1.810	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	56.9	0.00	22	54	11	82	81	-1.00	
1.500	1.530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.9	0.00	22	3672	2056	67	67	0.00	
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 141		%CHG: -0.59		141	6599	80399			
1: New 12 months high 2: New 12 months low 3: Listed during the past 12 months 4: P/E ratio in 100 or more 5: Negative P/E 6: Earnings in zero or N/A for the most recent year											
											

Credit card business posts strong growth in Asia despite restrictions

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Asia's credit card business is burgeoning on the back of rising affluence and aggressive marketing pitches, despite moves by rapidly-growing economies to check consumer spending and tame inflation.

Leading card issuers Visa, Mastercard and American Express, locked in a fierce competition in the region, believe the strong demand for plastic money in Asia would allow each of them to increase their market share.

"One of the things that makes Asia attractive is that the pie is getting larger because more individuals are having money to spend," Stephen Friedman, regional president of American Express International Inc. told AFP.

Mr. Friedman said an indication of the economic boom was the increasing number of people travelling on business and holidays.

"While we continue to have a strong share in travel and entertainment spending for business purposes, we are seeing new growth coming from other sectors, like people travelling on vacation," he said.

Credit card volume in Asia, with more than half the world's population, is expected to grow by 581 per cent over the next 10 years, according to Dennis Goggin, regional president of Visa International.

He said by 2005 the Asia-Pacific region would overtake Europe to become the second largest market in the world for card payments after the United States.

Card issuers in Asia are wooing new customers by offering a broader choice of payment options, providing more places to use their cards and new pricing

structures that make it more profitable for banks to issue cards for corporate dealings.

Safer methods of purchasing goods and services over the Internet are also being explored to cash in on the business potential of the global computer network.

Analysts say annual credit card spending in Asia could run into hundreds of billions of dollars, raising concern among governments over rising consumer spending, inflation and inadequate savings.

Visa and Mastercard, the top two credit card issuers in Asia, together chalked up a 23 per cent yearly increase in trading volume to \$206.52 billion in the region in 1995, according to the Nilson Report, an American publication covering consumer payment systems worldwide.

"Worries on excessive credit card spending among some fast-growing Asian economies are genuine because of their widening savings-investment gaps or current account deficits," said Irene Tang, an economist with Paribas Capital Markets in Singapore.

Malaysia last month imposed an annual service tax on all credit cards to "reach the people to be thrifty."

Thailand and Singapore are examples of markets where regulators have either increased the salary requirements for cardholders or limited the monthly spending limit on the card — or both.

"While this does limit the size of the market, Visa has reported continued growth in both markets since the introduction of the regulations," said Mr. Goggin.

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Capriati to face Seles in Chicago semis

CHICAGO (R) — Jennifer Capriati advanced to a semifinal round for the first time this year, earning a match with top seed Monica Seles in the \$450,000 Ameritech Cup.

"This is the year for both our comebacks," said Capriati, who advanced after injured Meredith McGrath withdrew from their quarter-final match on Friday trailing 5-2. "It's exciting, really. It will be fun, fun for me."

Swiss teen sensation Martina Hingis will try to avenge a loss in the Zurich finals when she faces second-seeded Czech Jana Novotna, ranked fifth in the world, in the other semifinal match.

Novotna defeated Brenda Schultz McCarthy 6-2 7-5 while Hingis, eighth-ranked and climbing, upset third-seeded, sixth-ranked American Lindsay Davenport 6-3 6-7 (5-7) 6-2.

McGrath found that playing both doubles and singles in her first tournament since arthroscopic surgery on her right knee was just too much.

"I thought that the more I played it would loosen up but it didn't," said McGrath, whose right leg was completely taped during the match. "When she broke me (in the sixth game) and went up 4-2, I couldn't imagine myself

coming back."

Capriati and Seles, who were considered the next great rivalry in women's tennis in 1991, are both making comeback bids and have not faced each other since the 1992 French Open.

Capriati, 20, missed two years because of personal problems and injuries and has reached the quarter-finals in two tournaments this year — Essen in February and Zurich in early October.

Seles, who shares the world number one ranking with Steffi Graf, was sidelined more than two years after being stabbed in the back in a 1993 tournament in Germany. The Yugoslav-born U.S. citizen has won four events including the Australian Open since that return.

But more recently, a sore left shoulder sidelined Seles for four weeks prior to the Chicago event.

"Maybe we're both still a little rusty," said Capriati, ranked 50th in the world.

Seles, 22, has beaten Capriati five times in seven meetings, including a memorable three-set victory in the semifinals of the 1991 U.S. Open. In their last meeting in 1992 at the French Open, Seles won 6-2 6-2 in the quarter-final round.

"I think for Jennifer to win, she'll have to be as sharp as she can be," McGrath said.

Novotna took advantage of a weary Schultz McCarthy, who had played a three-set, two-tiebreaker quarter-final match against Linda Wild late Thursday.

"In the first set, I got a little irritated," Schultz McCarthy said. "In the second set, it's too bad I couldn't get to a tiebreaker."



Jana Novotna

She did rally in the second game of the second set, Novotna was at break point at love, yet Schultz McCarthy regained her composure and powerful serve to win the game.

"With Brenda, it's always a difficult game for me because she has a really great serve," Novotna said. "I don't like to play against her. You hope for a second serve and try to win a point from that."

Hingis blew a 4-1 lead in

the second set against Davenport, but won the match in the fifth game of the third set when she held off the 20-year-old Olympic gold medalist, who was at break point seven times.

Hingis fired a forehand winner for the match, breaking Davenport in the final game. The two now have played three-set matches all four times they have met.

FIFA replaces Sierra Leone in World Cup qualifying

ZURICH (AP) — FIFA has replaced Burundi with Sierra Leone in the second round of World Cup qualifying for failing to assure security for matches in the central African nation, FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper said Friday.

Burundi beat Sierra Leone on 2-0 aggregate from the two-leg first round, including a 1-0 victory in Bujumbura on June 2.

Ethnic violence in Burundi between Hutus and Tutsis, similar to that in neighbouring Rwanda, has killed an estimated 150,000, mostly civilians since 1993. The slaying of the country's first democratically elected president, a Hutu, set off the spiraling bloodshed.

Burundi has been run by a military junta since July 25, when Maj. Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, seized power and pledged to discipline the Tutsi-dominated army.

Both the military and the Hutu rebels have been accused of killing civilians in the countryside. Each group blames the other.

"We gave (the Burundi football federation) until midnight Wednesday our time to say that they could ensure the proper organization and security of all persons involved, not only for the next match but all group matches," Cooper said.

"It was made clear, if they were not able to give the assurances, they would have to be replaced. They replied they felt they not in position to do so. We responded by replacing them with Sierra Leone."

The decision means Sierra Leone will play Morocco on Sunday, Nov. 10 in Rabat in one of two games in Africa second round Group 5.

Gabon and Ghana are the other two teams in the group.

The winners of the five African groups qualify for the 1998 World Cup finals in France. This was only the second time Burundi had entered World Cup qualifying. It was eliminated from the first round of 1994 qualifying, failing to score a goal.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Becker pulls out of Stockholm Open

MUNICH (R) — Boris Becker pulled out of next week's \$825,000 Stockholm Open tournament on Friday, blaming an ankle tendon injury and the hectic ATP schedule. A short statement released by Becker's manager said it was difficult to understand why this week's Paris Open had to begin straight after the Stuttgart Open, which Becker won last week with a thrilling victory in the final over Peter Sampras. The German star crashed out in the first round of the Paris tournament, losing to Carlos Moya of Spain.

U.S. women's baseball team on tour

ATLANTA (AFP) — Taiwan's professional baseball league wants women to follow the sport, so they have invited a touring United States women's team to play against their six all-male clubs. The Colorado Silver Bullets, based here, will travel to Taiwan next Wednesday to play the Taiwan major league clubs, a move aimed at having more women attend games and play the sport. Dean Yuan, director of the all-sports television network that owns the league, said more than 90 per cent of those attending pro baseball games in Taiwan are men. The Silver Bullets were invited to encourage female fans. Baseball has grown in popularity among Asian women. It was recently adopted as a national high school sport for women in Japan.

Cuban heroes suspended for life

MIAMI (AFP) — Cuban baseball heroes German Mesa, Orlando Hernandez and Alberto Hernandez were given lifetime suspensions because of their relationship with a sports agent who has helped others defect. Cuba won their second consecutive Olympic baseball title this year, helped by 27-year-old shortstop Mesa, a legend in his homeland. The punishments follow the defections of a star pitcher and two boxers before the Atlanta Olympics. Several top younger Cuban players have defected within recent years, as recently as last month. The suspended trio were punished for their relationship with agent Juan Ignacio Hernandez Nodar. Nodar is a cousin of Joe Cubas, an agent based here who has helped 10 Cubans defect and sign multi-million-dollar United States pro deals since 1991. Nodar, who lives in Venezuela, reportedly faces criminal charges for trying to help Mesa and the others defect. He was arrested at an international youth tournament in Cuba.

Ma Junren to go into hospital again

BEIJING (R) — Top Chinese athletics coach Ma Junren is to go into a Beijing hospital later this month for treatment for intestinal and throat problems, the Shanghai-based Youth daily said. Doctors in Dalian in the northeastern province of Liaoning examined Ma earlier this week and told him his condition could worsen if not treated promptly. Ma was treated in hospital in May for a non-cancerous intestinal ailment. He achieved international fame in 1993 when he coached three Chinese women to world records only to see his formidable "Ma's army" fall apart a year later.

Balakov extends Stuttgart contract

STUTTGART (R) — Bulgarian playmaker Krasimir Balakov on Friday extended his contract with VfB Stuttgart, committing himself to the Bundesliga side until the year 2000. The dazzling midfielder's partnership with strikers Fredi Bobic and Giovanni Elber has been dubbed the "magic triangle" by the German press. His current contract was due to expire at the end of this season. "The club doesn't have any opt-out clauses," club president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder said. "We aim to keep this team together and Balakov is at the heart of the side." Stuttgart lead the Bundesliga after 12 games.

Sampras to get Grand Slam award

MUNICH (R) — Pete Sampras will receive a new award named after former Wimbledon champion Fred Perry for being the best player in the Grand Slam season, Grand Slam Cup representatives said Friday. The U.S. Open champion will receive the Fred Perry award during the tournament in Munich in December. Perry's widow will be present at the prize giving. Sampras ended the Grand Slam season as world number one with 1090 points, ahead of fellow American Michael Chang (942) and Dutch Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek (792). Perry died last year at the age of 85. He won three Wimbledon and U.S. Open titles, and French and Australian Open titles.

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NORTH
♠ A 8 7 5 2
♥ 7 6 2
♦ K J 8 3
♣ A 6 5 4

EAST
♠ Q J 6 5 2
♥ 8 5
♦ A K 5 5
♣ A 6 5 4

SOUTH
♠ K 10 4 3
♥ Q J 10 9 4
♦ Q 4
♣ A Q

The bidding:
West Pass North Pass East Pass South Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠
If you don't buy the hand, getting too involved in the auction can give declarer a blueprint of the distribution. Saying nothing, however, can be equally revealing on occasion. Reverse West's heart and diamond holdings and few, if any, of today's experts would balk at introducing the proceedings in first seat. (Our tendency is to open this hand anyway because of the three quick tricks.) We would certainly have

made a takeout double at our second turn, although that had no influence on the outcome. Lastly, North's jump to four hearts has our unequaled endorsement. The Law of Total Tricks suggests that action, and it has the advantage of shutting out the enemy from finding a spade fit they surely have.

West led the king of diamonds, East dropping the jack to deny the queen. West nevertheless continued with the ace and another, declarer ruffing. The fate of the contract seemed to hinge on the king of hearts, but declarer elected to delay that decision until more was learned about the defenders' holdings.

After overtaking the queen of clubs with the king at trick four, declarer led a spade from dummy. East followed low and South's king lost to the ace. The hand was now an open book.

West, who had passed initially, had already shown up with 11 high-card points. Thus, it was impossible that declarer held the king of trumps as well. Declarer won the club return in hand and led a heart to the ace, and the king obligingly came tumbling down.

Declarer's discovery play in spades had paid a handsome dividend!

Bayern held to draw

FRANKFURT (AP) — Peter Nowak scored early in the second half to give 1860 Munich a 1-1 draw against the more famous local rival Bayern Munich in a Bundesliga match Friday.

A sell-out crowd of 68,000 at Munich's Olympic stadium saw an uneventful first half, until defender Markus Babbel drove home Bayern's goal in the 34th minute from close range. Nowak headed in the equalizer in the 55th.

Although down a man, Munich threatened Bayern's goal several times and goalkeeper Oliver Kahn made several good saves.

Colombia's Higuita quits club team

BOGOTA (R) — Flamboyant goalkeeper Krene Higuita, who decided earlier this year not to play for Colombia in qualifiers for the 1998 World Cup, has quit his hometown team in the northwest city of Medellin.

A statement from club Atletico Nacional said on Friday that Higuita, generally considered the most popular figure in Colombian soccer, had cited strictly personal reasons for his decision.

Atletico Nacional "deeply regretted" Higuita's departure and had offered him "all the help necessary to guarantee his return to sports."

Higuita with his lion-like mane of curly black hair is one of the game's true eccentrics, known in particular for his ability to thrill and startle fans with incredible and unconventional saves or dashing forays from his area.

He was a leading figure in the Colombian team at the 1994 World Cup finals and a teammate of Andres Escobar who was later shot and killed in Medellin after an argument over his own goal in a key game against the United States.

In April this year, Higuita said he was playing sub-standard soccer and needed some time off when he declined to join the national team.

Qweider launches PHAS products in Jordanian market

The General Manager of Qweider Trading Establishment Ali Qweider held a press conference at Hotel Intercontinental during which he announced the latest PHAS products which are now available in the Jordanian market

A: Qweider said that PHAS was founded in 1955 in Paris, France, noting that the chairman of L'Oreal Group, Francois Del, first put the first perfumed hypoallergenic products on display in the 1960s which was followed by the success of the products throughout Europe

In the 1970s, the group expanded to include several make-up products, mascara and foundation creams. In the 1980s, the continuous success of PHAS led to its expansion beyond Europe and in the 1990s, PHAS added new dimensions for its cosmetics to provide new beauty care.

Nowadays PHAS is spread throughout 27 countries in the whole world, and is committed to offer new products aiming at beautifying ladies who highly appreciate complexion care. Mrs. Chad Murad of Shalhoub Group stressed that it was getting more difficult to preserve beauty in the current polluted environment of the world today. She said that the air that we breathe is much more polluted than any time before. Sun rays and other factors also have an adverse effect on the complexion.

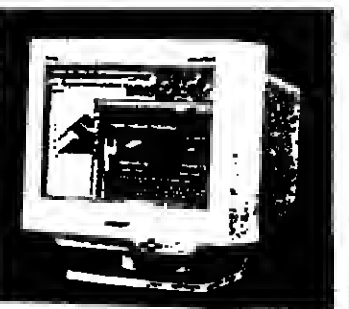
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Ahmad Zaki & Yusra...in
WHIMS
(Arabic)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420
CONCORD

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MORTAL COMBAT
SCARLET LETTER
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Shows: 3:30, 8:15

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Strug makes debut in touring gymnastics show

DURHAM (AP) — U.S. Olympic heroine Kerri Strug made her debut Friday night in a touring gymnastics show competing with a tour featuring her former teammates.

Strug, whose heroic last vault with a bad ankle gave the U.S. Women's team the gold medal in Atlanta, is the only Olympian on the world gold gymnastics tour that opened at the University of New Hampshire. The rest of the Olympic team is with a rival John Hancock Tour.

Strug's decision to split ruffled some feathers among the rest of the team.

"Sure, I wish I were with my teammates," Strug said after a practice for Friday's event. "But you can't live your life on what happened in Atlanta. I hope they support my decision. I support them. Deep down inside, I think everyone respects what I did."

"I think there will be plenty of opportunities down the road to do something with my teammates. We'll all have a special bond no matter what happens."

The 35-stop Hancock Tour was set up two years before the Olympics to celebrate the team's achievements. The three best-known members of the team at the time — Shannon Miller, Dominique Dawes and Dominique Moceanu — signed contracts giving them about \$1,500 a show.

When staying together as a team became a priority, the remaining four — Strug, Amanda Borden, Jaycie Phelps and Amy Chow — seemed sure to follow.

But no one counted on Strug's performance that made her the darling of the Games and a media sensation.

In late August, the women received an offer for another tour that also would feature gymnasts from Russia and Ukraine, and could have meant \$1 million per woman.

However, compensation was based on the number who signed with the new tour, and Dawes, Miller and Moceanu had contracts with John Hancock.

In the end, only Strug signed with the new tour, while the Hancock contracts were restructured to give the other six teammates more money.

Strug's decision to split ruffled some feathers among the rest of the team.

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Bulls, Knicks, Rockets win on opening day of 50th NBA season

TORONTO (R) — The NBA opened its season celebrating its 50th anniversary with a touch of nostalgia in Toronto's loss to the New York Knicks on Friday, while in Boston, Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls recreated more recent history with a win over the Celtics.

The Knicks' 107-99 victory over the Raptors came exactly 50 years from the day that the Knicks beat the Toronto Huskies 68-66 in the first game of a predecessor league to the National Basketball Association.

To honour the event, the teams wore uniforms similar to those the clubs wore in 1946. Toronto's uniforms featured "Huskies" across the front.

Allan Houston, who had 28 points, and Buck Williams made successful Knicks debuts by keying a 13-4 run midway through the fourth quarter that gave New York a win and spoiled the coaching debut of Toronto's Darrell Walker.

The Knicks acquired Houston, Williams, Larry Johnson and Chris Childs in the off-season in a bid aimed at challenging Chicago's supremacy.

Childs is on the injured list with a broken leg.

"The names on the backs of the Jerseys are not going to win it for us," Houston said. "We're really going to have to work for it. I had a lot of adrenaline my first game as a knick. It was nice to be part of the first win."

In Boston, eight-time scoring champion Michael Jordan scored 30 points and Toni Kukoc added seven of his 20 during a third-quarter burst as the Bulls opened defence of their NBA title with a 107-98 victory.

Dennis Rodman added 13 points and 13 rebounds for

the Bulls, who erased a 16-point second-quarter deficit and beat the Celtics for the eighth straight time. Chicago won its first five games last season en route to a league-record 72-10 mark.

In Orlando, Rod Strickland had 20 points and nine assists in his Washington debut as the Bullets handed the post-Shaq Magic an immediate home loss, 96-92.

The Magic won their first 33 games at Orlando Arena last season before suffering their first loss. But that was before all-star centre Shaquille O'Neal signed a seven-year, \$123 million free agent contract with the Lakers.

The loss was controversial. Gerald Wilkins hit what appeared to be a game-tying three-point jumper from the left corner with 7.4 seconds left for Orlando. But officials ruled his right foot was on the three-point line and called it a two-point basket, leaving the Magic one point behind at 93-92.

In Los Angeles, O'Neal had 23 points and 14 rebounds in his Lakers debut and Eddie Jones scored eight of his 11 points in a 15-4 run to close the 96-82 win over the Phoenix Suns.

In Houston, Clyde Drexler nearly recorded a rare quadruple-double with 25 points, 10 rebounds, 10 steals and nine assists as the Rockets rolled to a 96-85 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

Only four players in NBA history — Nate Thurmond, Alvin Robertson, Hakeem Olajuwon and David Robinson — have recorded quadruple-doubles.

Ex-Sun Charles Barkley, a new Rucker, served a one-game suspension for a pre-season fight.

At Utah, Karl Malone scored 27 points and John Stockton added 24 and eight assists as the Jazz scored a 99-91 victory over the Western Conference champion Seattle SuperSonics in a rematch of last year's conference final.

In Denver, Chris Gatling's dunk with seven seconds remaining capped a last-minute comeback as the Dallas Mavericks scored the final five points to give Rookie coach Jim Cleamons a 92-91 victory over the Nuggets.

In Detroit, Joe Dumars scored 27 points, including four free throws in the last 26 seconds, as the Pistons beat the Indiana Pacers 95-89.

In the first game at San Jose Arena, Loy Vaught scored 19 points and sparked a third-quarter run as the Los Angeles Clippers defeated the Golden State Warriors 97-85.

Latrell Sprewell scored 29 points for Golden State, which will be playing at San Jose Arena this season while the Oakland Coliseum Arena is renovated for next season.

In Miami, Alonzo Mourning scored 26 points and Tim Hardaway added 20 and 12 assists to lead the heat to a 94-81 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

At Minnesota, Tom Gugliotta scored 24 points as the Timberwolves took advantage of the absence of injured David Robinson and edged the San Antonio Spurs 82-78.

At New Jersey, Terrell Brandon scored 15 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter as the Cleveland Cavaliers spoiled the NBA debut of Allen Iverson as the Milwaukee Bucks defeated the 76ers 111-103 in the first NBA game in the CoreStates Centre.

In Vancouver, Clifford Robinson scored seven of his 22 points in a 16-0 burst in the third quarter as the Portland Trail Blazers breezed to a 114-85 victory over the Grizzlies.

The Charlotte Hornets were the only team not in action on the NBA's opening day.



Michael Jordan (top) of the Chicago Bulls tries to control the ball over the defense of David Wesley of the Boston Celtics in first half action in the season opener in Boston (Reuters photo)



The Los Angeles Lakers Shaquille O'Neal takes the floor of the Great Western Forum in Inglewood, Ca. during his regular season debut as a Laker. O'Neal's \$120 million deal with the team is the cornerstone for what the Lakers hope will be a championship season (Reuters photo)

nets coach John Calipari, 90-77.

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Afghan Taleban fighters fire a Soviet-made cannon from a position 25 kilometres north of the Afghan capital on Saturday (Reuters photo).

Fighting forces civilians to flee to Kabul; Dostum favours 'moderate Islamic regime'

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan civilians fled to Kabul Saturday from fighting on the frontlines north of the city, while the Taleban militia prevented others from leaving the capital, witnesses said.

"There is danger on this road due to fighting, therefore we don't let the people go out," said Taleban soldiers at a checkpoint.

A large crowd of pedestrians milled about around the checkpoint in the Khair Khana suburbs north of Kabul, many frustrated by the refusal of permission to pass to their home villages.

On the other side of the makeshift barrier, littered with the remains of broken cassette tapes of forbidden music, there was a line of 20-odd trucks packed with civilians and their household belongings waiting to enter Kabul.

"When we have searched the trucks, they will be allowed to go on to Kabul," the Taleban soldiers said.

Scores of civilians walked down the hill from the checkpoint at Khair Khana Pass, many carrying chickens or driving goats and cattle before them.

"We have come to the city to escape the fighting," said a family group headed by a

man carrying his two-year-old son.

He said his family was from the district of Sheka Dara which is located near the frontlines 20 kilometres north of Kabul, where the Taleban have been battling the forces of the ex-Kabul government for the past two weeks.

Locals fleeing the fighting area described heavy shelling but said they were not aware of infantry attacks.

There was no indication that the frontlines, which are at the village of Hussein Kot not far from Sheka Dara, had moved due to the fighting over the past few days.

Northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum has called for a "moderate Islamic regime" in Kabul and said the anti-Taleban alliance "accepts no plan before the total withdrawal" of the fundamentalist militia from the capital, a report said Saturday.

Speaking to a journalist from the Iranian newspaper Jomhuri-Isfahani from his stronghold of Mazar-e-Sharif, Gen. Dostum also criticised Pakistan's support for the Taleban, saying Islamabad was acting as "representatives" of the militia.

"We believe Pakistan is

trying to keep the Taleban in Kabul and its because of this that we insist on their withdrawal," he said, adding that fighting "will continue against the Taleban until their departure."

The anti-Taleban alliance, which also includes forces loyal to ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani, contends Pakistan is providing material support to the Taleban, a charge Islamabad denies.

Iran, for its part, is said to be close to the former government.

Speaking to the Iranian newspaper, Gen. Dostum reiterated his charges that Pakistani tanks and aircraft were supporting Taleban in combat near Kabul, Kandahar in southwestern Afghanistan and Jalalabad, 150 kilometres from Kabul.

The Taleban meanwhile said that forces loyal to the former government tried to move into territory in eastern Afghanistan under the pretext of surrendering, but were repulsed by the Islamic fighters.

The Taleban maintained control on the Daray Nur district in Nangarhar province after defeating militiamen belonging to the previous "corrupt" regime.

Taleban sources said.

A commander loyal to the ousted Afghan government reportedly launched a bid four days ago to capture the district, which lies north of Nangarhar's capital Jalalabad.

The commander, identified as Hazrat Ali, entered the area with his men on the pretext of a surrender, but engaged in fighting. Taleban-controlled Radio Shariat said, adding that Mr. Ali's forces were "defeated and driven away."

But Afghan travellers reaching Kabul from Jalalabad said fighting had not ended in the eastern district, contrary to Taleban claims.

Mr. Ali was one of the pro-Kabul commanders who tried to resist the Taleban capture of Jalalabad in early September when it fell to the Taleban almost without a fight.

The neighbouring provinces of Kunar and Laghman, which also fell to the Taleban before they marched on to seize Kabul on Sept. 27, are believed to still provide sanctuary for some remnant forces of the ex-government.

Iran says 10,500 Iraqi Kurds went back

TEHRAN (AFP) — More than 10,500 of 85,500 Iraqi Kurd refugees who have sought shelter in Iran have returned home, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Saturday, citing an interior ministry official.

Ahmad Hussein, an interior ministry official dealing with refugees, said Iran had provided all the food and other necessities to the more than 10,500 Iraqi Kurds who have returned home to northern Iraq.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurds have fled northern Iraq for Iran since fighting erupted in late August between two rival factions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The two groups agreed to a permanent ceasefire on Thursday in U.S.-mediated talks in Ankara.

Mr. Hussein said that Iran would need international assistance in case of more Kurdish fighting in northern Iraq and for a transfer of refugees away from the border.

"The transfer of refugees from the buffer zone in border regions to camps (further inside Iran) will be possible only if necessary facilities and credits are provided by international organisations," he said.

Mr. Hussein said Iran needed \$14 million just to build shelters for the Kurdish refugees.

An official in Tehran of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), meanwhile, made a new appeal for the refugees to be moved from inaccessible areas of the border region before harsh winter conditions set in.

The agency "has stepped up its efforts, but in vain, to have the Iranian authorities concerned transfer the refugees," he said, asking not to be named.

The official said his agency has a 60,000 total for the number of Iraqi Kurdish refugees in Iran.

Italy to open interests section in Iraq soon

BAGHDAD (R) — Four Italian diplomats have arrived in Iraq to open an interest section for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war, a diplomatic source in Baghdad said on Saturday.

The source said the section would open under the Hungarian flag but gave no date.

"(Head of section) Cesare Ragagnini and the other three Italian diplomats arrived in Baghdad on Friday to open an interest section," the source told Reuters.

Last week an Italian official, who was invited by the Iraqi government, said Baghdad had sent a diplomat to Rome to head an Iraqi interest section there working under the Sudanese flag.

"Qais Al Yakoubi who will head the Iraqi interest section in Rome has left Baghdad," said Antonio Loche, secretary-general of the government-funded Italian Institute for Asia.

Italy, Baghdad's fourth largest trading partner

before the war, sent a mission in February to Iraq to look at opening an interest section in Baghdad in the Hungarian embassy.

Iraq severed diplomatic ties with Italy and Arab and Western countries which took part in the U.S.-led military coalition which drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in 1990.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini announced in July that the planned interest section would be opened.

Iraq is under stringent U.N. trade sanctions imposed on it after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The curbs include a ban on Iraq's oil exports and imports of all commodities except for food and medicine, for which Iraq has little cash.

The U.N. Security Council retained on Friday the sanctions, mainly because it says Baghdad has not fully detailed its manufacturing programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

Arafat phones Leah Rabin on anniversary of murder

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat phoned the widow of Israel's slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to pay tribute Saturday to "this hero of the peace of the brave" on the first anniversary of his assassination.

"I deplore the loss of this hero of the peace of the brave and I call upon Israelis to follow the path which he laid down," Mr. Arafat told Leah Rabin, a Palestinian official said.

Mr. Arafat paid a secret visit to the Rabin home in Tel Aviv shortly after the Nov. 4, 1995 assassination by a Jewish fanatic opposed to the prime minister's policy of trading land-for-peace with the Palestinians.

Hundreds of Israelis paid a special tribute on Saturday by riding horses from the Mediterranean coast to Jerusalem along a route taken by armed forces led by Rabin during the 1948 war.

On the eve of a rally in support of the peace process, a monument to Rabin was unveiled late Friday in the Tel Aviv square where he was gunned down 12 months ago and that now bears his name.

"The most beautiful monument in memory of Rabin will be the peace that Israel concludes with the Palestinians, the Arabs and all the peoples of the Middle East," said Labour opposition leader Shimon Peres.

Leah Rabin called for Israelis to visit the monument every Friday "as a sign of their commitment to the message of peace." A crowd of hundreds filed past the monument and laid wreaths.

Peace activists had called a mass rally for Saturday in Yitzhak Rabin square in support of the peace process, stalled since the May election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister.

Egyptians sleep uneasy after building disaster

CAIRO (R) — A wave of angst swept Egypt last week as the disastrous collapse of an apartment block in Cairo reminded Egyptians that thousands of lives may be in danger from the lax enforcement of building regulations.

The collapse last Sunday had an even greater impact because the building lay in a solidly middle-class neighbourhood, where people might expect building standards to be higher.

The 11-storey block, in which at least 63 people were killed, was also a short walk from the home and the office of President Hosni Mubarak in the northeastern district of Heliopolis.

Old buildings often collapse in poorer parts of the city but they are usually smaller and the casualty tolls are lower.

Reacting to public outrage at the incident, the government has used military law and the state of emergency to push through stiff new penalties without recourse to parliament, which does not start its autumn session until next week.

Publicity about the disaster has led to a spate of reports that other buildings are also on the verge of collapse.

Residents of one block of 44 flats, also in Heliopolis, had to leave their homes on Friday when police learnt that the owners had retrofitted some of the concrete structures in the basement to make way for some air-conditioning pipes.

Cairo Governor Omar Abdul Akher visited the

building and inspected the modifications in a public show that the authorities are determined to clamp down on offenders.

Police are holding the owners of that building for questioning, along with the owner of the one that collapsed and the engineers responsible for renovations in one of the flats.

In the Cairo district of Giza the local authorities evacuated two adjacent buildings there on Friday, the opposition newspaper Al-Ahram said on Saturday. One building is leaning 10 centimetres and would knock down the other if it collapsed, it said.

In the Mediterranean city of Alexandria one eight-storey building is being demolished, also as a direct result of the sudden campaign, and the local planning committee has recommended that people leave three other buildings as soon as possible, said the government newspaper Al-Akhar.

The governor of the Nile Delta province of Gharbia has decreed that no extra floors may be built on top of any existing buildings — a major cause of such disasters.

But building experts say panic measures can touch only the tip of the iceberg and many Egyptians will have to sleep with danger for many years to come.

"It has been found that 98 per cent of the buildings in Medinet Nasr violate the regulations, and 97 per cent of those in Mhandiseen and Dokki," Omayma Salaheddin, the head of the

government's building inspectorate, told Al-Akhar.

The three Cairo districts, concrete jungles built mostly in the 1970s and 1980s, house several million people.

"We have one case of seven buildings where the file now contains 380 pages, decrees that building should stop, decrees that building works be dismantled but none have been carried out," she added.

The reality is that Egypt, with 60 million people crammed into the narrow confines of the Nile Valley, has nowhere to house the people whose houses may be in danger.

Gamal Badawi, editor of the opposition newspaper Al-Wafd, asked his readers to imagine what would have happened if the government had ordered the Heliopolis building evacuated and demolished before it collapsed.

"Would they have let the building? Or would they have gone to court, written to papers appealing against the decision and hurried to the best architects to buy documents to prove the building is stronger than the pyramid of Cheops?" he said.

"Probably the government, as usual, would have yielded to the fast approach to avoid a headache, because it does not have the money to compensate the residents or the means to carry out compulsory eviction orders," he added.

Dr. Ruth on cyberspace

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Ruth Westheimer, the grandmotherly television sex therapist known as Dr. Ruth, has moved into cyberspace with her own site on the world wide web.

"The Internet's dramatic growth makes it the next logical medium for me to use to promote sexual literacy and sex education," Westheimer said. "It's an exciting opportunity to reach millions with my message."

According to publisher Creative Multimedia, the web site (www.druth.com) has been named by America Online as an "outstanding website" and Yahoo!, an Internet search engine, designated it "Site of the week."

Pavarotti to sing in Yucatan

MERIDA (AFP) — Italian tenor opera star Luciano Pavarotti has booked a concert performance for next year in the Mayan Indian zone of Chichen Itza, in Yucatan state. The archaeological zone of Chichen Itza, formed by the remains of a city built in two eras — between the fifth and 10th centuries and between the 11th and 13th centuries — will prove the venue for the concert. Ticket prices will range from \$50 to \$1,500, according to the promoters, of the April 19, 1997 event.

Houdini's papers on Internet

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Photographs and documents from the life of the great escape artist and magician Harry Houdini, who died 70 years ago, are now available on the Library of Congress Internet site. The Houdini collection is included in the American variety stage, one of two new collections available on the library's world wide web site.

Houdini, known during his life as the "genius of escape who will startle and amaze," bequeathed his collection of rare books and manuscripts on the history of magic and personal documents to the library. Highlights from these collections will be on-line as part of the national digital library programme, available at <http://www.loc.gov/>.

Gang bust for credit card fraud

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Treasury Department announced Thursday the arrest of 32 people in connection with an international network of American Express Card Fraud possibly linked to Nigerian organised crime. A five-month long investigation led to the arrests, which took place in several large U.S. cities, including Miami, New York, Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles Wednesday, the department said in a statement.

The investigation was carried out by the Secret Service, the same branch of the Treasury Department that is responsible for the safety of top U.S. officials, including President Bill Clinton. Suspects were also arrested in London and Montreal, the treasury said, indicating that the 32 detainees were indicted for conspiracy to commit access device fraud and wire fraud. Working with American Express, the Secret Service determined that two American Express employees were tapping into the company's system and giving out customers' confidential information to their accomplices. The suspects' activity reportedly extended to the United States, Canada and Britain, and totalled some \$2 million. Searches yielded cash, forged documents, and many American Express credit cards.

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Number 6369

Pr... say... gre... By P.V... Jordan Tim... AMMAN... eign Minis... makov on... Middle E... describing... Israeli-Syri... one of the... ments of h... the region... Arabs was... Russian rol... peacemakin... The Russ... held a press... the full pot... an-Russian... tions was... realised. Ho... role of "Je... in strengt... relations.

Mr. Pri... country c... Middle Eas... along with... alied that M... trying to... Washington... peacemakin... would resum... role in the... as to guaran... and stabil... don't want... one else's l... The Russ... -ter, who... Lebanon, E... the Palesti... arrived here... he had Syr... assurances... want an arm... "Both Syr... suspected... planned a... Mr. Pri... reporters... had passe... assurances... military... Israel..." in... Israel.

"In resp... Prime Min... Netanyahu... Minister (D... Israel did n... itary operat... the Syrian

Isra... thro... TEL AVIV... Israel asked... Secretary M... on Sunday to... sage to... against pro... ments and... two count... cials said.

Meeting u... mar at the su... visit to Isra... ister David... Rifkind to b... between Is... linked to a n... in bilateral... series of... manoeuvres... the border... Mr. Rifkind... in London... Syrian For... Farouk Al... Levy asked... message to... ascus to a... operations"... and to refra... "provocative... Israeli offic... Mr. Levy... Israel's des... peace talks... frozen since... A British... Mr. Rifkind... intermediary... would speak... Levy by te... Mr. Shara...